

TEL AVIV, Israel — A young
woman from Australia
has died in a hospital
in Tel Aviv, Israel, after
being found unconscious
in a public place. The
woman, identified as a
student, was taken to
a nearby hospital where
she was pronounced
dead. The cause of death
is not yet known.

NEW YORK (AP) — The
Russian forces tightened
their stranglehold on Grozny
on Sunday, capturing key
sites in the city as they advanced
on the central presidential
palace in what seemed a final push to crush
Chechen resistance there.

Amid reports that President
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by Russian tanks, troops and warplanes around the palace.

Russian forces earlier captured
sites throughout the city centre. Around 30 tanks
supported by dozens of snipers
took up position within 300 metres of the palace,
according to Chechen fighters returning from the front lines.

Witnesses said that the air force had dropped banned fragmentation bombs, while Russian artillery targeted virtually all areas of the city.

In Moscow, the Russian government said Mr. Dudayev had fled the capital and set up his headquarters in the village of Galanchezh, 40 kilometres southwest of the rebel Caucasus republic's capital.

In a statement cited by the ITAR-TASS agency, the government said Mr. Dudayev left the city Friday with his bodyguards, adding that Security Minister Sultan Gelikhman has also fled Grozny for Gudermes, Chechnya's second city 40 kilometres to the east of the capital.

Both reports were unconfirmed by Chechen authorities, but a Chechen opposition

Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike

NABLUS, occupied West Bank (AFP) — Palestinian prisoners held at an Israeli military detention centre near here began a hunger strike Sunday after clashes with guards left three wounded, Palestinians said. The prisoners were demanding an improvement in visiting conditions for their families. Violence flared on Saturday at the Fara detention centre east of Nablus in the occupied West Bank, where hundreds of Palestinians are being held. Guards fired on the prisoners when they tried to set fire to tents, a military spokesman said. Two of the prisoners were wounded by bullets and a third was lightly hurt when he was hit by a sharp instrument. About 6,000 Palestinian prisoners are still held in Israeli jails and the Palestinian self-rule authority has been demanding their release. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres are due to discuss the issue in talks on Monday at Erez on the border between Israel and the autonomous Gaza Strip (see page 12).

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Most Palestinians want end to talks

NABLUS, Occupied West Bank (AFP) — A majority of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and autonomous Gaza believe the peace talks with Israel should be halted, according to a poll published Sunday. The poll carried out by the Palestinian research centre in Nablus found that 31.5 per cent wanted the talks suspended while 20.6 per cent said they should be stopped for good, making a total of 52.1 per cent. Only 37.8 per cent — of the 1,086 Palestinians aged 18 and over questioned for the survey — wanted the talks to go on uninterrupted. The poll was carried out between Dec. 29 and 31 in the West Bank town at the height of a crisis over expansion work on the Jewish settlement of Ephrat. The Centre for Research and Studies on Palestine noted there was greater opposition to the negotiations in the occupied West Bank than in Gaza. "This could be due to the frustration felt by residents of the West Bank in the absence of progress in applying the (autonomy) accords, while the inhabitants of Gaza can see the Palestinian Authority in place," it said.

New government sworn in

17 deputies, 2 women in 31-member cabinet; 12 ministers from Majali government retained; Kabariti gets foreign affairs, Karaki information and Jardaneh finance; all blocs except IAF and leftist parliamentarians included

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker on Sunday formed a 31-member government that included 17 deputies, 12 members from the Majali cabinet and 10 first-time ministers.

The new cabinet, which was sworn in by His Majesty King Hussein, was quickly described as a government focused on the centre of the Jordanian political spectrum. And as such, it is expected to win the approval of neither the extreme left, the extreme right nor the ultra-nationalists among Jordanian political parties.

Sharif Zeid's third government in six years includes two deputy prime ministers, Deputy Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh who retained his old post in Abdul Salam Majali's government as minister of education, and Khaled Al Karaki, a former chief of the Royal Court and an adviser to King Hussein, who would also hold the portfolio of information.

Of the 12 members of the previous government who retained their posts in Sharif Zeid's government, former Minister of Trade and Industry Rima Khalaf was the only one to change her portfolio as she moved to the Ministry of Planning.

Sharif Zeid, who was designated to form the government last week, (although that was officially announced Saturday), put the final touches on it only yesterday, after three days of consultations with parliamentary blocs and representatives of political trends in the country.

Apart from the 17-member

Following is the list of Jordan's new 31-member Cabinet:

Prime Minister and Minister of Defence: Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education: Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information: Khaled Karaki

Minister of Youth: Awad Khleifat

Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs: Ibrahim Izzeddin

Minister of Finance: Basel Jardaneh

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Abdul Karim Kabariti

Minister of Postal Affairs and Communications: Jamal Sarairah

Minister of Transportation: Samir Kawar

Minister of State: Jamal Khreishah

Minister of Industry and Trade: Ali Abu Raghib

Minister of Water and Irrigation: Saleh Israeilat

Minister of Health: Aref Batayneh

Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs: Abdul Salam Al Abadi

Minister of Interior: Salameh Hammoud

Minister of Planning: Rima Khalaf

Minister of Public Works and Housing: Abdul Razzaq Esour

Minister of Supply: Adel Oudah

Minister of Agriculture: Mansour Ben Tarif

Minister of Higher Education: Rabea Saoud

Minister of Justice: Hisham Tel

Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs: Abdul Majid Azizam

Minister of Labour: Nader Abu Sha'ar

Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment: Nader Thmeirat

Minister of Culture: Samir Habashneh

Minister of State: Mohammad Abu Odeim

Minister of State: Taha Habashneh

Minister of Administrative Development: Moheddin Toq

Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources: Samir Darwazeh

Minister of Tourism and Antiquities: Abdul Ilah Khalaf

Minister of Social Development: Salwa Damqa-Masri

(NAF), which apparently succeeded in convincing the prime minister-designate to give it five portfolios so "that its representation in the government will correspond with its size."

Founder of the group Abdul Hadi Majali told the Jordan Times his bloc asked for the five portfolios but left it to the prime minister-designate to determine who

of its members will head which ministry.

Mr. Majali, who was earlier expected to be on Sharif Zeid's team, said that he was asked that he be excused from joining the government so that other members of the bloc can participate.

The five ministers who represent the NAF are: Rabeb Saoud (higher education), Mansour Ben Tarif (agriculture), Nada Abi Al Sha'ar (labour), Taha Habashneh (state) and Abdul Majid Al Azzaam (parliamentary affairs). Mr. Saoud and Mr. Ben Tarif held the same positions in the previous government.

The 10-member National Democratic Coalition (NDC) has the second largest representation in the government as it holds four portfolios that include the key Foreign Affairs Ministry which went to prominent Deputy Abdul Karim Kabariti, who chaired the House's Foreign Affairs Committee until his appointment in the government yesterday.

The other three members of the coalition on Sharif Zeid's team retained their positions in the previous government. They are Samir Kawar (transport), Saleh Israeilat (water and irrigation), and Aref Batayneh (health).

The Jordanian National Front, which is made up of nine deputies who follow centrist policies, received two portfolios with that of state going to its president Jamal Khreishah. The second is held by Mr. Rawabdeh, who also heads the centrist Al Yaqaitha party and is its only representative in the House.

The largest representation is from the 17-member National Action Front

(Continued on page 7)



His Majesty King Hussein poses with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and his cabinet after Sunday's swearing-in ceremony (Petra photo)

Sharif Zeid pledges to achieve goals set in letter of designation

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, whose government was sworn in on Sunday, has pledged to spare no efforts to achieve the national objectives as outlined in the letter of designation issued by His Majesty King Hussein.

In a reply to the letter of designation, Sharif Zeid said his government was committed to extend continued support for the Palestinian people

and care for the Islamic holy shrines in Jerusalem.

Underlining the theme in the letter of designation that Jordan was at the threshold of a new era that warranted every effort, Sharif Zeid pledged that his government would consider the letter as the guideline for its mission.

He said his government would give priority to agriculture and tourism and focus on offering all opportunities for the private sector to use its full potential in developing the national economy.

King Hussein's letter of designation will give due attention to dealing with poverty and unemployment," the former chief of the Royal Court and commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces said.

Sharif Zeid also pledged to maintain and nurture the democratic process in the country, cooperate with Parliament and ensure the independence of the judiciary.

Referring to the King's instruction that the government

(Continued on page 7)

Russian forces choke Grozny; Dudayev said to have moved

GROZNY (Agencies) — Russian forces tightened their stranglehold on Grozny on Sunday, capturing key sites in the city as they advanced on the central presidential palace in what seemed a final push to crush Chechen resistance there.

Amid reports that President Dzhokhar Dudayev had fled the war-ravaged Chechen capital, several hundred of his fighters continued to resist a concerted offensive by Russian tanks, troops and warplanes around the palace.

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Both reports were unconfirmed by Chechen authorities, but a Chechen opposition



Marwan Al Qasem appointed Royal Court chief

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday appointed Marwan Al Qasem, a former chief of the Royal Court and foreign minister, to fill the post of chief of the Royal Court left vacant when Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker became prime minister and formed his government.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the King issued a Royal Decree naming Mr. Qasem as chief of the Royal Court.

Mr. Qasem has served as chief of the Royal Court in the late 80s and also as foreign minister in several cabinets.

Immediately prior to his new appointment, Mr. Qasem was King Hussein's political advisor. He was appointed to that post in 1994.

Jordan, Greece seek boosted ties

AMMAN (Petra) — Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou said Sunday Greece wanted to enhance ties with Jordan in all fields, especially in economic, trade, tourism, culture and social affairs.

Speaking during an official meeting with caretaker Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali in the presence of ministers from both sides, Mr. Papandreou said that his country was interested in establishing a Greek cultural centre in Amman.

Dr. Majali and Mr. Papandreou reviewed regional and international issues of common interest and the developments in the Middle East peace process and the roles which Greece and Jordan can play in enhancing peace in the region.

Dr. Majali expressed hope that the Greek premier's visit to Jordan would further bolster bilateral ties.

Dr. Majali lauded Greece's efforts through the European Union which he said had expressed appreciation of Jordan's position with regard to the peace process.

He reiterated Jordan's total commitment to international legitimacy and the implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

Dr. Majali noted that the Jordan-Israel peace treaty secured the return of Jordan's lost lands and water rights.

Mr. Papandreou earlier visited the tomb of the late King Abdullah, founder of the Kingdom, and laid a wreath there.

An official statement said that a joint communiqué summing up the outcome of Mr. Papandreou's visit to Jordan would be issued in



His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday presents the Al Nahda Decorated Medal to Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou (Petra photo)

Amman and Athens after the Greek premier ends his official visit to the Kingdom.

Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor on Sunday hosted at Al Nadwa

palace a dinner in honour of Mr. Papandreou and his wife Dimitra Liani-Papandreou.

The dinner was attended

by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, the prime minister's wife, former Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali and Mrs. Majali, Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem and his wife, Health Minister Aref Batayneh, Planning Minister Rima Khalaf, Talal Al Hasan, head of the honour team accompanying the Greek visitors, Jordan's Ambassador to Greece Amjad Al Majali and the delegation accompanying Mr. Papandreou on the visit.

King Hussein conferred upon the Greek premier the Al Nahda Decorated Medal and on Mrs. Papandreou the Al Nahda Medal of the First Order.

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Home & Middle East News

JORDAN TIMES, MONDAY, JANUARY 9, 1995

France offers JD12.48m in soft loan, grant to Jordan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The French government is extending JD 11.44 million in soft loans and JD 1.04 million in grants to Jordan under a protocol finalised in Paris last month, a French diplomat said Sunday.

Michel Duger, commercial counsellor at the French embassy here, said the protocol, which has to be approved by the Jordanian government before it takes effect, covered the year 1994.

"It was finalised at the last minute," said Mr. Duger, who attended the discussions in Paris in mid-December between Jordanian and French officials that led to the accord. The agreement has already secured the approval of the French government, he added.

According to Mr. Duger, the protocol involves 88 million French francs (JD 11.44 million) in loans repayable over a period of 20 years plus 10 years of grace in 40 half-yearly installments carrying a one per cent interest.

The net grant impact of the loan is about 70 per cent" taking into consideration the depreciation of currency over three decades, said Mr. Duger. A similar accord for fiscal 1993 involved 85 million francs (JD 11 million) a repayment period of 10 years with 10 years grace, he said.

Jordan also requested that it be allowed more flexibility in the allocation and utilisation of assistance rather than confining its options by incorporating conditions in the protocol, the minutes said.

The French side promised to study the Jordanian request and also wanted to know what specific sectors Jordan wanted to allocate the 1995 aid to, the report said.

The Jordanian side responded by noting that the Kingdom had submitted 121 national and regional projects, estimated to cost about \$18 billion, at the Oct. 30-Nov. 1 economic conference held in Casablanca and that the Kingdom would like to use some of the aid in the water, transport and telecommunication sectors.

Jordanian-French discussions also involved direct French loans to the Jordanian Treasury, under soft terms, to be used for onward lending to the Kingdom's private sector on the same terms and projects to encourage French investments in Jordan.

The signing of the 1994 protocol followed a debt relief agreement under which France rescheduled about \$200 million of Jordan's debts and agreed to swap \$100 million for investments in the Kingdom.

It was not immediately known when Amman and Paris would finalise the 1995 protocol.

Abdul Meguid: No summit

DUBAI (Agencies) — Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid, who arrived here Sunday on the last leg of a Gulf tour, has failed to win support for holding an Arab summit next month.

Dr. Abdul Meguid ruled out the possibility of holding a summit of the 22-member league that he had predicted, when he left Cairo last week, would convene in February.

He told a press conference in Riyadh late Saturday that any reconciliation between Arab countries still deeply divided over the 1991 Gulf war was "dependent on Iraq applying all the U.N. Security Council resolutions."

An initiative launched in March 1993 to try to heal the rifts in the Arab World had only received the backing of 14 out of the league members.

In his Riyadh comments, Dr. Abdul Meguid told Iran not to use a policy of force or pressure in its dispute with

the UAE over three strategic Gulf islands.

"If Iran uses a policy of force and pressure, I don't think this is in Iran's interests," Dr. Abdul Meguid said.

He said the Arab League fully supported the UAE in the dispute and its call on Iran to refer the issue to the International Court of Justice.

Earlier on Saturday, the Arab League's assistant secretary-general, Adnan Omar, said in remarks made in Cairo that he regretted Iran's inauguration of a courthouse on the Gulf island of Abu Musa, which is at the centre of the territorial row.

"The new Iranian action is extremely regrettable because it embodies the illegal aggression Iran undertook in 1971 by occupying the three islands that belong to the emirates," he told reporters.

European assistance to help Jordan's Development and Employment Fund

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The European Commission is extending JD 3.36 million to help the programmes of the Development Fund (DEF) and has signed an accord under which a German agency would offer technical assistance to the programme.

Yves Gazzo, head of the delegation of the European Commission in Amman, said the assistance of four million European currency units (ECUs) — about JD 3.36 million is part of aid allocated under a 1992-96 protocol signed by the commission and the Kingdom.

Mr. Gazzo said three million ECUs of the amount would be in the form of direct grant and one million ECUs in soft loan.

Under the accord signed last week, GTZ, a German agency for technical cooperation, would offer technical assistance to DEF programmes that would help small-scale enterprises that create job opportunities.

The accord allocates European Commission financing of 1.6 million ECUs (JD 1.34 million) for the GTZ assistance, which will involve close studies of the DEF programme.

Any deal with Lebanon also hinges on an accord with Syria, which is the main foreign power broker in Beirut.

Mr. Duncan warned that if Mr. Rabin's Labour Party is not re-elected the peace process will move even more slowly.

Although he believed economic and military imperatives were driving Syria to seek peace with Israel, he said that failure on any negotiating track could undermine existing peace treaties, including that between Israel and Egypt.

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Sri Lanka begins 2-week truce

COLOMBO (R) — Guns fell silent across Sri Lanka's northeast region for the first time in four years Sunday at the start of a two-week truce between the government and Tamil separatist rebels, military officers said.

"The truce is holding — we have had no reports of violations in the 12-hour period to 12 noon (0730 GMT)," a senior officer said by telephone from Mannar district.

Army officers from other areas made similar reports but rebel spokesmen could not be reached for confirmation.

The cessation of hostilities came into force at 12 midnight on Jan. 7 and foreign-backed peace committees to monitor it are expected to start operating Monday or Tuesday.

The truce, the first since April 1989 to June 1990 ceasefire, followed last week's agreement between President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and Tamil rebel leader Velloppillai Prabhakaran on a ceasefire as a step towards peace.

A morning meeting due Sunday between government and rebel military commanders was however called off.

Clinton touts tax breaks, tweaks Congress

WASHINGTON, (R) — President Bill Clinton Saturday vowed to protect his programme to reduce the national budget deficit from any attempt by the Republican-controlled Congress to increase deficit-spending to pay for tax cuts.

"We have led the way to the largest two-year deficit reduction in the history of our country, and I will not allow anyone to destroy this progress in reducing the deficit and to threaten our economic recovery," Mr. Clinton said in his weekly radio address delivered from the Oval Office.

Mr. Clinton feels generous Republican tax-cut proposals would hurt his effort to reduce the deficit, which he said has stanching the flow of red ink by \$700 billion in two years, or \$11,000 in less debt for every family in America.

He insists his own five-year, \$60 billion proposal for middle-class tax breaks, including credits for education costs, would not add to the deficit.

"Now, anybody can say, 'I want to give you a tax cut,' and make people very happy in the short run," Mr. Clinton said. "I want our people to have more than a quick fix."

Republicans counter that their plans for cuts in government spending to be unveiled later this month would pay for tax relief.

In the Republican response, Representative James Longley of Maine said Republicans would press ahead with plans to reduce the size and cost of government.

"Mr. President, Americans are working for less money because their taxes have been going up faster than their incomes. Government has become the problem. And we're serious about shrinking government."

The president, trying to remain a viable political force in spite of devastating Nov. 8 elections in which Republicans took control of both the House of Representatives, saw his public approval rating go up to 47 per cent against 44 per cent disapproval in a new CNN/Time magazine poll released Saturday.

This was an improvement over a similar poll last month that showed 41 per cent of people approved his handling of the job while 49 per cent disapproved.

But in a sobering statistic, the survey found that most Americans do not think the president will be reelected in 1996. A total of 65 per cent polled said he would lose against 24 per cent who thought he would win.

On the comeback trail, Mr. Clinton is portraying himself as a leader who can work with the majority party.

"We've seen for too long how people in Washington can obstruct progress for partisan gains," he said in the radio address.

But he also took the opportunity to tweak the majority in Congress for failing to vote in favour of lobbying reform.

"The rebel leadership informed us through the International Committee of the Red Cross that the meeting was off because all their commanders in the north and the east had been summoned for a briefing in their northern Jaffna stronghold," a military source said.

The two sides had been expected to discuss arrangements for the truce, due to last till Jan. 22 but expected to be extended.

The truce was initially worked out by government officials and negotiators for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam guerrillas last week in talks in Jaffna. The two sides also agreed on a 40 billion rupee (\$816 million) rehabilitation plan for the north.

The truce will be monitored by six committees based in Jaffna, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya in the north and Trincomalee and Batticaloa-Amparai in the east.

Each committee will have two members from the government and two from the rebels, with a representative from a foreign country chairing it.

Norway and the Netherlands have accepted invitations to serve on the committee.

In Batticaloa, 200 Tamil prisoners suspected of involvement in rebel activity began a hunger strike urging the government to release them in view of the truce.

Tamil Tigers have announced a daily ferry service to their Jaffna peninsula stronghold as the truce went into effect, residents in rebel-held territory said Sunday.

They reported that the LTTE had said they would operate day-time crossings of the Jaffna lagoon — earlier declared a no-go zone by the navy — following their "cessation of hostilities" agreement with the Colombo government.

Tamil residents arriving at the government-controlled town of Vavuniya, 255 kilometres (160 miles) north of here, said the Tigers had announced a daily boat schedule to replace hazardous night-time crossings three times a week.

Meanwhile the Sunday Times of Colombo said police had arrested the husband of a suspected rebel suicide killer who blew up presidential candidate Gamini Disanayake in an election rally last October.

The rebels denied accusa-

tions by some police officers that they were responsible but the government suspended the second round of peace talks scheduled to resume then and re-started it only last Tuesday.

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The government and the LTTE have also agreed in principle to open two land routes to the Jaffna peninsula and to work harder for internal peace.

Kenya's President Daniel Arap Moi (centre), Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu (left) and Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, President of Burundi (right) pose at the Presidential Palace prior to the start of a one-day summit to discuss how to persuade hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees to return home. Leaders from seven central and east African nations gathered to attend the meeting (AP photo)



African leaders clash on Rwandan refugees

NAIROBI (AFP) — Leaders from seven African nations meeting here Saturday urged the creation of "safe corridors" for returning Rwandan refugees and called on the new Rwandan government to work harder for internal peace.

Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi said before the first group of 26 Hutu militiamen thought to be responsible for some of the massacres were arrested and handed over by Zaire to the authorities in Kigali.

A member of the Rwandan delegation said the most controversial point was how to bring about national reconciliation in a session marked by angry disagreements.

The presidents of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia and the prime minister of Zaire agreed a brief statement after their five-hour closed-door meeting backing the United Nations international criminal tribunal, set up in November to try those responsible for the April to June massacres in Rwanda.

Up to a million people — mostly ethnic Tutsis — are thought to have been killed between April and June last year in Rwanda and hundreds of thousands of Rwandans, both Hutu and Tutsi, displaced both within and outside the country.

A storm moving in from Alaska brought driving rain and snow and strong winds to northern California, downing power lines and cutting off electricity to tens of thousands of people.

In Los Angeles, heavy rain flooded freeways, sent mudslides pouring onto roads in Malibu, and was blamed for numerous accidents.

Severe thunderstorms, including storm-triggered tornadoes, caused severe property damage in the Orlando, Florida, area, where some garage doors were torn from homes.

A tornado tipped through Marion County, Florida, before dawn, destroying dozens of mobile homes in a trailer park and uprooting trees.

The western Great Lakes region shivered in freezing temperatures and Omaha, Nebraska, was blanketed with snow Friday.

Icy weather made driving hazardous across Tennessee, the Carolinas and Ohio.

In the Carolinas and Virginia, five motorists were killed on icy roads as freezing rain resulted in hundreds of accidents.

The Tennessee Highway Patrol reported two traffic fatalities since Friday afternoon and said at least one was due to icy roads. Six weather-related traffic deaths were reported in southern Ohio.

Northern California was pounded throughout the night by heavy rain and snow and strong winds. There was a lull in the storm Saturday, but two more storms were forecast to arrive before Monday.

"It is for this reason that the president will spend time with Mr. Murayama on APEC."

"Japan's leadership needs to be exercised in a very pro-active manner" to ensure the timetable is respected, the official said.

The two sides are also hoping to use this summit in the 50th anniversary year of the ending of World War II to take stock of their bilateral relationship and where it is headed in the next 50 or 100 years.

"This is a very critical point" and the two leaders will try to "see how to set up a shared view of what our bilateral relationship should be in the next century or 50 years," said a Japanese official.

Mr. Murayama will be accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister Yohei Kono, who will be present at Wednesday's summit.

Mr. Kono will also meet with Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

The Japanese premier's visit is relatively brief. He arrives Tuesday, and visits Arlington military cemetery and other landmarks, meets with Mr. Clinton and probably congressional leaders Wednesday, then leaves for home Thursday.

Storms lash U.S., tornado hits Florida

MANILA (R) — Pope John Paul will be greeted by hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of largely uncritical devotees when he visits the Philippines this week on his first big tour since being stricken with ill health last year.

The Pope, who had bone replacement surgery on his right leg last April, will be under the spotlight to see whether the man who used to dazzle sides with his workload can still withstand the rigours of a trip that will take him to Papua New Guinea, Australia and Sri Lanka.

In Asia's only predominantly Christian country, where divorce and abortion are outlawed, the Pontiff is likely to hear little of the public criticism his conservative religious doctrines provoke in Europe and North America.

Estimates of the crowds he will attract in his four days in Manila to celebrate the 10th World Day of Youth begin at

one million and top two million.

"I have so many problems to stop people from coming but I think that the area will accommodate about two million people," Cardinal Jaime Sin, Manila's archbishop and the nation's most powerful prelate, said in an interview.

"People will come, how can I stop them?" he said.

It will be Pope John Paul's third visit to the Philippines and his second as Pope. As Pope he first visited in 1981 when the Philippines was just emerging from years of martial law.

The Roman Catholic Church, which represents 85 per cent of the 65 million people in the Philippines, sees itself as a "bridge" for Christian Evangelisation in Asia.

It is a deeply spiritual country where parish priests regularly pack their churches with the faithful in a way long forgotten in Europe.

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Working level talks between the three countries are due to open here Monday on the setting up of the Korea Energy Development Corporation (KEDO), which will be in charge of financing and building the reactors.

Japanese press reports have said that Tokyo will foot 30 per cent of the cost of the new reactors, to be provided to North Korea in exchange for abandoning its own nuclear programme.

French EU presidency gets off to a bumpy start

PARIS (R) — France's six-month presidency of the European Union has got off to a bumpy start on the very issue on which Paris vowed to make progress — establishing a credible, coordinated EU foreign policy.

The first week of French stewardship featured a public row over France's solo initiative in thawing relations with Iraq and some dithering over Russia's military assault on rebel Chechenya.

On the plus side, the EU did manage a "routine" statement on clashes between Israel and the Palestinians, and Paris hosted confidential talks designed to keep Western embassies open and safe in Algeria despite a purported Islamic guerrilla threat.

But it was France's official reception of a senior Iraqi leader for the first time since the 1991 Gulf war that highlighted the limits of EU solidarity in foreign affairs.

In a jibe rich in political irony, Euro-sceptical Britain faulted the French for being poor Europeans by failing to open a diplomatic interest section in Baghdad from one of the smaller EU states said.

In this case, the national interest would appear to be that Iraq, long a prime client

for French arms and capital goods, owes Paris about \$5 billion and is unable to earn hard currency to service its debt due to the U.N. oil embargo.

The Chechenya conflict has confronted the EU with a foreign policy challenge more complex, if more remote, than the war on its doorstep in former Yugoslavia.

Chechenya is sovereign Russian territory, and EU states agree they have an interest in preserving Russia's territorial integrity. Yet Moscow's heavy-handed assault on Chechenya has appalled Western public opinion.

Diplomats said France had informed its Western and Middle East partners in advance of Mr. Aziz's impending visit, but Britain said there was no EU coordination.

"This incident demonstrates that when national interests are at stake, the big European powers still go it alone rather than waiting for a European consensus to emerge," a diplomat from one of the smaller EU states said.

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Man files suit for marrying wrong bride

iran files suit
marrying
long bride

IRAN (AFP) — An Iranian court has filed a law against his wife's parents for forcing him into marrying their sister of the woman's choice, newspapers said Sunday.

The man, identified only as Ibrahim, told the court he wanted to marry the family's younger daughter, Maryam, and was asked to ask for her hand. But on the wedding day, the family refused to let Maryam with their other daughter, and he could not understand the difference because the marriage was covered in keeping with Islamic tradition. Only after the ceremony had been completed did the groom realize he had been duped into taking a wrong wife, newspapers said.

Similar incidents have occurred in the past in Iran. In one case, the groom was a woman who had been taken away by the family of the bride before the wedding.

zens queue
stolen violins

PARIS (R) — Paris police seized 1,000 stolen violins and unusual instruments Saturday, asking people to step forward and give up their lost instruments. Owners of musicians, orchestras and other European orchestras queued up at the Louvre-Montaigne Avenue trying to identify the violins through hidden markings left by the thief. Some said violin makers recognise their instruments just by touching them. But police asked one to produce some proof such as pictures, case slips or police tickets. Police mounted a day exhibition after recovering the violins from a music dealer who was arrested last November. He claimed he bought them directly from thieves and was getting them at high prices, said several of the 400 violin dealers.

ink reopens
in coffin as
coffers

London (R) — A dead British bank manager died after a heart attack while he kept some much-needed cash of the old building containing a coffin in the safe. Natwest Bank boss decided to honour the wishes of his son, Robert Henry Trigg, who died in 1974, suggesting his coffin and remains be left in the safe during his funeral in Stevenage, a town north of London. He terminated his body to be snatched by grave robbers supplying graves for medical school students and his corpse left when it could be seen and heard. Sadly, he fears came during World War I soldiers entered in the safe to steal his bones for war. "We feel he was a true part of the family and there is even now his ghost comes occasionally," said bank manager Noel Whittle.

He took 7
years to cross
antic

ROCHELLE France — A bottle tossed into the sea off the southern coast of the United States in 1987 washed up on a beach near this western town, and a man who found it a year later said: "I'm a part of it." The year's big scroll, Robert Poirier and Robert Poirier, picked up the bottle and a single currency, which was a \$1 note, was found inside. "Congratulation, you have found the bottle," said Chris Wren, with an address and telephone numbers. It was disclosed that the bottle was on its voyage on July 8 at 10 a.m. from the island off Georgia.

kies offer
odds on
being alive

"I don't think the time is appropriate now for constitutional change," he said.

The IGC is designed to build on the Maastricht Treaty, signed by European Community leaders in 1992, which agreed closer political and economic ties between member states.

A deep rift that treaty caused in the ruling Conservative Party is still gaping and Mr. Major, hoping to

Hurd arrives in Pakistan amid Kashmir controversy

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd arrived for a two-day visit to Pakistan Sunday to face an angry reception over his reported remarks backing Indian policy in the disputed region of Kashmir.

"I have not been properly reported," Mr. Hurd said in Lahore, southeast of here, responding to his arrival from New Delhi to charges he had implicitly accused Pakistan of aiding militants in Indian-held Kashmir.

Mr. Hurd said he had spoken of ending external support for Kashmiri militants "if at all there is



Chechen fighters take cover allowing an armoured personnel carrier captured from the Russian troops to go forward on the main street leading to the Presidential Palace in Grozny. Intense Russian artillery fire and air raids left the palace, symbol of the city of the bride, in ruins.

Chechen's three-year-old drive for independence, in flames today as Moscow escalated its assault on the capital of the rebel Caucasus republic (AFP photo)

Shades of Sarajevo haunt Grozny

GROZNY, Russia (R) — Shouts of "Allahu Akbar" (God is greatest) and thunderous artillery fire echo through the capital as Muslim street fighters with green headbands and Kalashnikov rifles battle tanks manned by Orthodox Christians.

Women and children cower in basement bomb shelters while blocks of flats and office buildings burn through the night. There is no running water or electricity and — for the poor at least — no escape

from the city. Televised pictures of the carnage win underdog Muslim's world sympathy for their pluck, but the public remain generally uninterested in the centuries of history that have suddenly erupted in fighting.

This is Grozny in Chechnya, not Sarajevo in Bosnia, but the similarities are very clear.

The two cities on the fringes of Europe's have become battlegrounds where mostly

Muslim peoples are under assault from Orthodox Christian enemies.

The Balkans lie on one of the world's great fault lines, where Rome and Constantinople once divided the Christian world into east and west and where catholicism later contended with the Muslim empire of Ottoman Turks.

The Caucasus, a patchwork of ethnic groups, was seized by imperial Russia in the last century. It took Moscow 40 years to quell resistance from the region, and the fiercely independent Chechens were never happy under Russia's yoke.

Despite Chechnya's 1991 declaration of independence, Russia insists the region is an integral part of the Russian Federation. No country recognises the region in the north Caucasus as an independent state.

Tangles of languages and religions have made the Balkans and the Caucasus among the world's most turbulent areas, ignited afresh by the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Predominantly Muslim Sarajevo has been under siege by the Bosnian Serbs for more than 1,000 days, with 10,000 residents killed and another 50,000 wounded by snipers and shell fire.

On the strength of a recent ceasefire, many observers hope the conflict there has entered its final stages.

Russian troops have been battering Grozny for just a month, but already their heavy guns have ripped the fabric of the city seemingly beyond repair.

Wary of taking heavy casualties, prohibited by political considerations from levelling the capital with bombers, the Russians have adopted the Serb tactics of

A cloud of smoke covers the sky over the Chechen parliament situated opposite the Presidential Palace in Grozny. The intensity of the Russian artillery fire was unprecedented in the month-old intervention by Moscow's troops and forced secessionist fighters to fall back around the presidential building (AFP photo)

U.K. vows to veto EU constitutional changes

LONDON (R) — Britain will refuse any significant new constitutional changes in the European Union for the foreseeable future, Prime Minister John Major said Sunday.

He told BBC Television he would veto any moves to tighten the political bonds between EU member states at the key inter-governmental conference (IGC) next year.

"If anything that involves significant constitutional changes were raised in the 1996 inter-governmental conference, we the British would not accept it," he said.

"I don't think the time is appropriate now for constitutional change," he said.

The IGC is designed to build on the Maastricht Treaty, signed by European Community leaders in 1992, which agreed closer political and economic ties between member states.

A deep rift that treaty caused in the ruling Conservative Party is still gaping and Mr. Major, hoping to

defuse a rebellion by anti-European parliamentarians, has gradually toughened his stance towards the EU.

The prime minister, often accused of weak leadership, told interviewer David Frost that he would "of course" lead his party into elections due in 1997.

Constitutional changes in the EU could include abolishing the veto each country has on important matters, extending qualified majority voting, bestowing massive new powers on the European Parliament or making a firm commitment to a single EU currency, he said.

A single currency was unrealistic in the next couple of years and Britain would certainly not join, he said.

But if any as yet unforeseen change "wriggled through" his opposition at the IGC, he might put it to British voters in a referendum.

Their excommunication technically leaves the anti-

ism... is now on the decline. I have no intention of adding to it in the 1996 IGC so I will not accept constitutional change that impacts on the British parliament," he said.

Britain is pushing for a looser but wider European Union, opening the doors so Eastern European countries can follow Austria, Finland and Sweden who joined in Jan. 1.

"My idea of the right sort of Europe is to extend Europe, not leave it as a cosy little pattern of Western European nations," Mr. Major said.

Last month eight diehard Euro-rebels, opposed to growing EU influence over national policy, were effectively cast out of the parliamentary Conservative Party for voting against a bill to boost EU funding, and a ninth followed them out in disgust.

Their excommunication technically leaves the anti-

popularity Major with a minority government. But he said he was confident of winning a vote next week in which opposition parties will try to end Conservative chairmanship of key committees.

Mr. Major said he hoped the rebels, who were buoyed by a Sunday newspaper poll showing they had strong support among their voters, would prove their loyalty to his government in the coming weeks so they could be welcomed back into the fold.

He spent much of his first big interview of 1995 defending his record, especially on the economy, and rounding on the main opposition Labour Party whose leader, Tony Blair, has soared above 35 percentage points in polls.

"I find myself wholly unperturbed by Blair's lead," he said, and predicted Labour's lead would evaporate as the election neared, the economy improved and Mr. Blair's novelty faded.

India blames Pakistan for training and arming the militants, a charge denied by both sides.

The statement was interpreted here as an implicit accusation that Islamabad was aiding militants in Kashmir, which India and Pakistan have fought two wars since their independence from Britain in 1947.

The Kashmir crisis does not originate from external support to the so-called militancy," a Foreign Office spokesman said, adding that British observers had attested to the "complete alienation of Kashmiri people with Indian rule."

"I mean if he stood as a presidential candidate, supposing he had won — how would he have ruled this country for five years?" Mr. Muluzi said.

Rose presses on with Bosnia truce

SARAJEVO (R) — The United Nations military commander in Bosnia, struggling to cement a fragile ceasefire, Sunday pressed on with efforts to overcome Serb objections to the way the truce is to be implemented.

U.N. Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose held hurriedly arranged talks with the commander of the Bosnian Serb Army, General Ratko Mladic, in the ski resort of Jahorina in the mountains above Sarajevo.

Negotiations on finalising details of the ceasefire have stumbled over a row about a demilitarised zone near the Bosnian capital.

The Serbs have refused to reopen roads into Sarajevo to civilian traffic until troops of the Muslim-led Bosnian government army leave the demilitarised zone near the Bosnian capital.

The four-month ceasefire, which took effect on Jan. 1 following a peacemaking visit to Bosnia by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, is intended to pave the way for talks on a political settlement of the 33-month-old war in Bosnia.

But Bosnian Croats, the war's third main faction, made clear Sunday that they were ready to fight on if peace negotiations did not start before the ceasefire expired.

The four-month ceasefire, which took effect on Jan. 1 following a peacemaking visit to Bosnia by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, is intended to pave the way for talks on a political settlement of the 33-month-old war in Bosnia.

Elsewhere in Bosnia, the United Nations reported just

pires in May.

"Unless political talks on a final peaceful settlement in Bosnia begin by May 1 we shall start fresh liberating activities," Kresimir Zubak, president of Bosnia's Croat-Muslim federation, told a news conference in Zagreb.

The Bosnian Croats, backed by troops from Croatia, launched a successful offensive in southwestern Bosnia in December, capturing a large part of the Livno Valley and forcing 5,000 Serb civilians to flee.

The Serbs retaliated by shelling Livno and the surrounding area. They last attacked Saturday, violating the ceasefire with about 15 shells hitting in and around the town.

The United Nations says however that the ceasefire is generally holding, with the exception of the Bihać enclave in northwestern Bosnia where rebel Serb and Muslim elements have not signed the truce.

A United Nations spokesman said fighting continued around the town of Velika Kladuša in the northern part of the Bihać enclave where Bosnian government forces are faced by renegade Muslims and Serb forces from Croatia.

Elsewhere in Bosnia, the United Nations reported just

eight confirmed ceasefire violations in the past 24 hours.

There were more than 300

artillery

explosives

bursts

of machinegun fire,

but the United Nations only

considers these to represent ceasefire violations when it can confirm they are attacks by one side on the other.

A U.N. spokesman said

General Rose might have

talks with

Bosnian government

military officials after meeting Gen. Mladic, but this was not confirmed.

U.N. peacekeepers set out again on a patrol of the Mount Igman demilitarized zone near the town to check whether Bosnian soldiers had withdrawn from one remaining occupied area.

If they were found to have

pulled out of the Vojkovic

area, U.N. peacekeepers

would take government and Bosnian Serb officers on a joint inspection of the zone Monday to verify that no more combatants remained inside.

Bosnian Serb military

officers dispute the U.N.

claim that the demilitarized

zone has been all but vacated

by government forces and

made clear again Sunday that they would not reopen roads into Sarajevo while government troops remained.

Sarajevo Airport was

reopened to humanitarian aid

flights a day after they were

halted when two U.N. relief

planes were hit by gunfire.

U.N. spokesman Major

Herve Gourmelon said 23 flights were expected Sunday.

The Sarajevo airlift, the main means of feeding the city's 380,000 residents, has been disrupted dozens of times by gunfire since it started in mid-1992.

On Saturday two French U.N. peacekeeping soldiers were slightly wounded by gunfire in Sarajevo the U.N. spokesman said.

Major Gourmelon said UNPROFOR had not determined who had shot at the French peacekeepers.

A ceasefire has been in place throughout Bosnia since Jan. 1, but random shooting increased in Sarajevo over the weekend during the Serbs' festive Orthodox Christmas holiday.

Maj. Gourmelon said a French patrol vehicle came under small arms fire in the western suburb of Dobrinja in mid-afternoon and its driver was hit in the eye by shattered glass.

In the second incident, a French soldier was hit in the arm by a bullet while on duty at Sarajevo's Brotherhood and Unity Bridge, which spans a footbridge near the centre of the city.

Scandals return to haunt Balladur

PARIS (Agencies) — Corruption scandals returned to haunt French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur Sunday, just as his popularity reached new heights ahead of this spring's presidential election.

Two of his ministers, key allies in his probable bid for the presidency, were at the weekend the targets of accusations that they could be involved in illegal party financing.

Another centrist politician, Jean Bousquet, mayor of the southern town of Nimes, was being probed on suspicion of falsifying invoices, legal sources said at the weekend.

Most major French political parties have been hit by illegal financing scandals.

Mr. Balladur has said any minister involved in a vengeful finger at the leaders of the PR, Defence Minister Francois Leotard, Enterprise Minister Alain Madelin and ex-Industry and Trade Minister Gerard Longuet.

"I agree to be responsible but I won't be made a scapegoat," Mr. Thomas told France 2 Television Saturday night.

"I believe a treasurer manages the party finances under the leadership and authority of the party leaders," he said, adding that they should all be accountable to the law.

A government inquiry said Wednesday that police acting on official orders had killed cabaret ministers Aaro Gadamia, Dick Matenje and Twaiwa Sangala and Member of Parliament David Chiwanza in May 1983 and disguised their deaths as a car crash.

After the commission made its findings public, the government placed Mr. Banda under house arrest and Mr. Tembo was taken to prison.

"What happens tomorrow (Monday) involves all the four accused persons," Mr. Nasulu said.

He would not comment on whether they could be granted bail.

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Jump-starting foreign policy

JORDAN'S FOREIGN policy in the new era, as elucidated in His Majesty King Hussein's letter of appointment to Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, is a continuation of the Kingdom's decades-old policies of pursuing peace and good relations with every country that wants them with us. The King made clear to the prime minister that he wanted a foreign policy that aims at achieving a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, improving the Kingdom's relations with Arab states and ensuring that the country's ties with world nations continue to be based on mutual respect and interest.

Perseverance in pursuing these policies despite the obvious odds is bound to lend greater credibility to Jordan's position and it will eventually lead to improving the Kingdom's standing among all world nations. Jordan's relations with other Arab states, strained as a result of the Gulf war and subsequent events, require a tremendous effort to put back on track. But we trust that that effort will be made concordantly and intelligently, by the new foreign policy team guided by His Majesty the King and headed by Sharif Zeid, and the result can only be an improvement on what is happening already, if not outright successful.

Paramount among Jordan's ties with other Arabs is the Kingdom's special relationship with the Palestinians. The Kingdom, as the King told the prime minister in his letter of appointment, pledges to continue to support the Palestinians' right to self-determination and to regain their other legitimate rights under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Dialogue and coordination are the best tools to translate the King's words into action. And dialogue between Jordan and the Palestinian leadership is long overdue. True His Majesty has been in touch with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, even under difficult circumstances, but the time has arrived for the two sides to start implementing agreements already reached and to reach other agreements that continue to elude us.

On the front of Arab ties, Jordan can use its current presidency of the Arab League Council to advance the Arab reconciliation effort started by the league's secretary general, Esamat Abdul Meguid.

Jordan, which the King envisions as being a model in the rule of democracy and human rights, can still play a major role in the overall effort to reconcile Arab ranks, especially after Iraq met most of the conditions for lifting the U.N.-imposed sanctions.

In the final analysis, Jordan stands to benefit from cultivating its new standing as the first Mashreq state to make peace with Israel and help put an end to a conflict that has dragged on for too long. For this to happen, though, the world has to see that Jordan needs support and encouragement. The new government would do well to begin the process of opening eyes on this objective. Explaining and proving the soundness of Jordan's position thus becomes a top priority.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Sawt Al Shaah strongly attacked Russian President Boris Yeltsin for his continued aggression on the Chechen people. This war is no different from the onslaught which Mr. Yeltsin had launched on his predecessor Soviet leader Michael Gorbachev and his wars are motivated by the hope that he will receive U.S. assistance, said Arafat Hijazi. The writer said that the Russian war on the Chechens and the destruction of their country can win Mr. Yeltsin no glory in American financial help. Mr. Yeltsin is trying to do America a favour by fighting the Muslims under the pretext that they want to separate from the Russian Federation despite the Chechen people's repeated declarations that they would like to maintain the strongest possible and good neighbourly ties with Moscow, added the writer. The Western condoning of Mr. Yeltsin's aggression is a tacit approval of Western nations support for Moscow to annihilate the Muslims by any possible means and under any pretext, added the writer. The writer blamed the Muslim nations of the world for failing to help their Muslim brothers and sisters by trying to halt the aggression and the destruction of a Muslim nation.

A WRITER in Al Dastour welcomed a visit by a team from the Iraqi foreign ministry to Damascus, saying that the two sides are in need of each other's help in the light of the circumstances facing the Arab World. Saleh Qallab said that Damascus is finding it impossible to regain its lost territory without the help of the Arab states and so it organised a meeting with Cairo and Riyadh, which could have been instrumental in arranging for Baghdad and Damascus to reach agreement on joint action to end their enmity first and then work together towards regaining the lost Arab territory, said the writer. But, he said, without stopping the propaganda campaigns waged by Damascus against Baghdad and vice versa, and without ending the sanctions, which Syria is imposing on Iraq, little can be expected from such meetings. The writer expressed hope that the two neighbouring states would find a formula to overcome their side differences and embark on some kind of action that would revive solidarity among Arab states.

Human Rights File

By Waleed Sa'di

Moscow's unjustified war

IN COLD blooded terms, the armed and political conflict over Chechnya boils down to two basic issues: one is the right to preserve and protect the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation as clearly enshrined in international law and the other is the right of the people of Chechnya to exercise the right of self-determination as also equally cemented in international law, especially in its human rights dimension. What the international community has to decide in the final analysis is whether the right of states in this context comes ahead of the right of peoples. The rule of thumb in contemporary international law is that the right of peoples to determine their future and destiny is of a superior value and when it comes in conflict with the right of states, it must be given priority and superiority in application.

This much Moscow, under the leadership of President Boris Yeltsin, does not seem to comprehend as it wages its war against the Chechen people who after all are only asking for their freedom to determine whether they wish to continue to be associated with the Russian Federation or not. It is no trivial matter to recall that the Chechens are a distinct people from the Russian people and enjoy a different religion and culture. There are hardly any grounds for President Yeltsin to cling to his imperialist posture that calls for the subjugation of a people that are for all intents and purposes alien to his own people.

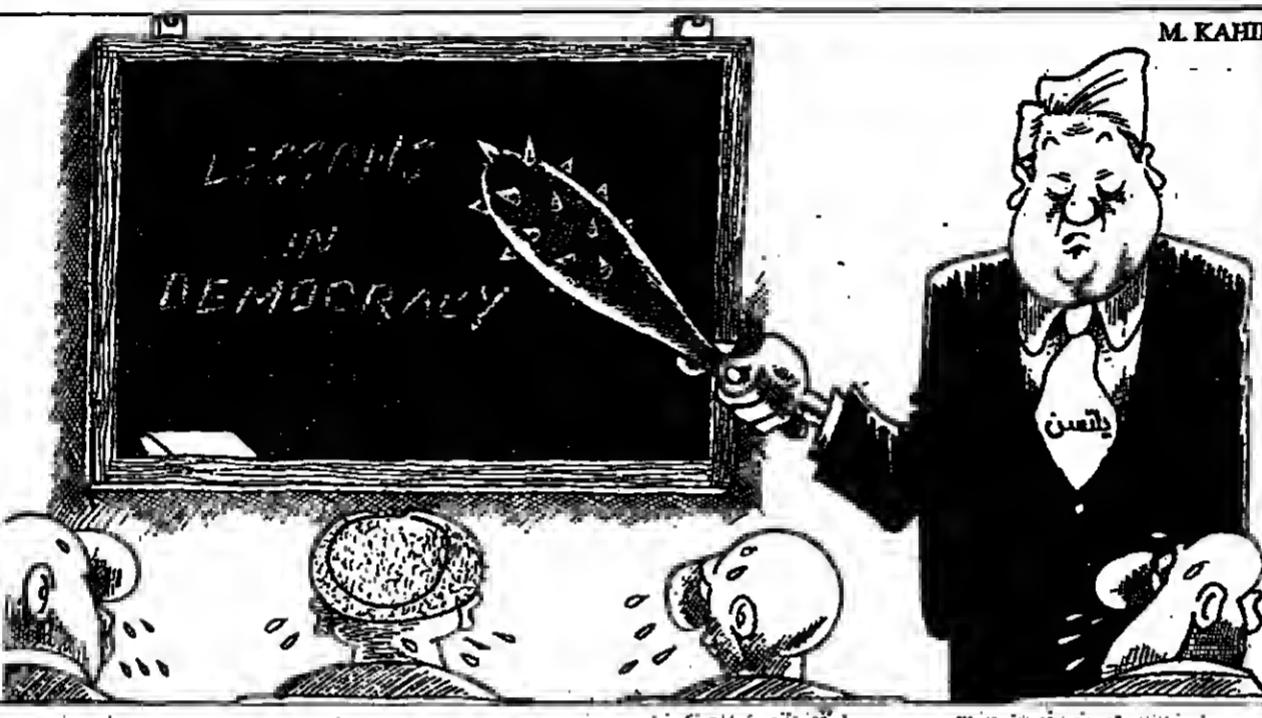
Perhaps Moscow sees in the battle for Grozny a symbol for protecting its geopolitical objectives and interests, especially since Chechnya is known to have huge deposits of oil. Better still, President Yeltsin may see in winning the war over that Muslim country the guarantee to shore up his political fortunes amidst renewed attacks on his leadership by old and new enemies.

But Mr. Yeltsin is wrong to think that the war against Chechnya will boost his image. The image of the regime in Russia can be strengthened and improved if it heeds the lessons of history and upholds the democratic ideals, it says

it is predicated upon. Moscow's support of an all out war against Chechnya is therefore flawed in every sense of the word and cannot be expected to hold much water in the face of the stubborn Chechen resistance.

Even if the invading Russian forces succeed in their mission to bring the Chechens to their knees and force them to accept to be part of the Russian Federation, the conflict will re-erupt in the future simply because the Chechens will continue to demand their rights to self-determination. On the other hand, yielding to justice and fair play would bring new and more important and lasting victories for Moscow. Suffice it to recall that forging new and more solid relationships with countries such as Chechnya stand to enforce the democratic path of new Russia and put it on a more stable course. Surely, Russia knows that the days of subjugations are gone and finished and that the yearnings of suppressed peoples for liberty can never be quashed for ever.

Of course, the international community would be the first to recognise Russia's strategic and regional needs for security. A free and democratic Chechnya can be expected to take this legitimate concern into consideration. The economic links between Moscow and its neighbouring states can also be expected to take deep root on the basis of the mutual benefits of the two sides. Meanwhile, Russia is called upon to free the Chechens from any imposed bondage by affording them free and democratic opportunity to choose and determine their fate. An early Russian withdrawal from Chechnya, followed by the holding of a national referendum under international supervision, would be the right course to take in order to bring back sanity to the situation. President Yeltsin is well poised to exercise this option in view of his repeatedly declared commitment to human rights, including the right to self-determination.



A troubled world primed to explode

Richard Dowden sees money and trade as increasingly dominant forces in 1995, while politicians retreat from global responsibility

BY A thousand different routes they are moving in. They come in search of jobs and homes — a better life. There are millions of them, but they appear in no statistics. The police can only catch a few and turn them back. They cannot stop this human tide, which will become even bigger in 1995. It is one of the largest movements of human beings in history.

The movement of people across China from the impoverished rural areas to the south and east coast cities will be one of the most significant events of the end of the millennium, according to Western experts on China. Compared to migration on this scale, the few Mexicans who slip across the U.S. border into California, the numbers of Africans who come to Europe from North Africa or east Europeans who move westwards are insignificant.

Helped by this illegal migration, China's economy is growing at nine per cent a year, transforming the world's second largest country from a peasant agrarian society into a world industrial power.

The emergence of China onto the world stage was marked by its unsuccessful demand to be a founding member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which was inaugurated as the successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

China is still claiming status as a "developing country" which gives it certain concessions to protect its industries and agriculture. The U.S. and the EU are objecting on the grounds that it is already one of the world's top trading countries. Because of this dispute China may not be able to join the WTO until later in the year, but it is serving notice that it is not simply its nuclear capacity which merits a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council.

In recent years, Beijing foreign policy has appeared different and remote, but after the death of Deng Xiaoping, which has been described as "imminent" for some time, China is in a change of leadership and an inevitable reassessment of its past and future policies.

World leaders are re-

markable by their absence from the stage now. In Washington, President Bill Clinton has been hobbled by the victory of the Republican right in the November elections. France will have a new President in May. In Britain, John Major is struggling to lead his own party. Japan is experimenting with a new electoral and parliamentary system. Italian politics are back in the melting pot, and in Germany Chancellor Helmut Kohl is into the last quarter of his game.

In Russia, however, the war in Chechnya is making President Boris Yeltsin look more like an old-fashioned dictator than a democrat. What other ambitions might Russia, in its present atavistic mood, have in the Caucasus?

The weakness of each leader has local causes, but it may not be a coincidence. Five years from the end of the cold war, the world is beginning to realise that it was not the end of communism which caused most impact but the end of all political philosophy. The loss of identity at the end of the cold war, the lack of political ideas, the decline of the nation state and the power of national governments all contribute to defensive individualism that does not bode well for international understanding.

Politicians did not suddenly discover a miraculous consensus, but they have lost or abandoned control of so much that once constituted government. The global movement of money and trade have put them beyond the regulation of any nation state. Governments now are mere managers trying to look good and make rules which will attract investor confidence in their patch.

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What is now certain is that the U.S. and Europe will continue to diverge. The "special relationship" has all but evaporated as

the Atlantic generation, which knew the importance of U.S. intervention in two world wars, dies off.

In Europe, the newly enlarged union will be preparing for the intergovernmental conference to be held in 1996, but the vital questions on further enlargement eastwards to include Poland, Hungary and the Czech and Slovak republics must be decided this year. Throughout Europe there has been an increasing disillusionment with the Maastricht vision and the idea of

could begin to transform the region, an effect which might gradually spread to the rest of continent.

In Japan this year, the members of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation will discuss an agenda for lowering trade barriers and possibly building a Pacific trading bloc. Since this includes Japan and the U.S. as well as China, this should become the most powerful of all but its disparate politics make further cooperation more difficult. Whatever happens to APEC the increasing cooperation of Japan and the Asian "tigers" with China make this the most economically dynamic region of the world.

But do not forget that the regional blocs, political as well as economic, also indicate the failure of a global economic and security agreement. The new world order, the toast of the post-cold war honeymoon, has finally evaporated. The U.S. which should have led it, was frightened by its failure in Somalia and will not allow any of its soldiers to be put at risk outside its zone of interest again.

Because the U.S., Britain and France are the only countries in the world capable of delivering troops and equipment rapidly to a war zone, this retreat from global responsibility means that the United Nations peace-enforcing capacity is nibbled. By its 50th birthday this year, the U.N. may be reduced to a register of idealistic resolutions and a depository for the failures of the permanent members of the Security Council.

It may be able to police a few prearranged ceasefires but its ability to negotiate peace agreements, let alone impose them, is drastically diminished.

As if to symbolise this,

Somalia will be finally abandoned to the clan war gangs at the end of March, when the last U.N. troops are due to leave. After billions of wasted dollars and the lives of over a hundred U.N. soldiers, Somalia will

become again a no-go land for the rest of humanity. A more terrible catastrophe is unfolding in the refugee camps of eastern Zaire, where some two million Rwandans are camped, angry and vengeful. As the prospects for their peaceful return lessen by the day, there is an increasing likelihood that they will launch guerrilla raids into Rwanda, reducing the area to a state of permanent ethnic war.

How long will the rest of the world provide food and assistance in such circumstances?

Liberia too is running out of grace. Its five-year civil war, now a battle between well-armed gangs of uncertain allegiance, has also exhausted the West African peacekeeping force and the donors which support it.

The fear is that this is the beginning of a trend, a continent-wide violent reordering of power in Africa in which millions will die. So far, the man-made catastrophes have been in small and unimportant countries, but what happens when a country like Nigeria catches fire? It is as close to civil war as it can be, while its military rulers seem to be devoting their energies to stealing from the state and stamping on any signs of dissent.

The failure to protect Bosnia is another example of the inability of Britain, France and the U.S. to fulfil the obligations of the U.N. Charter.

This year will determine whether the fig leaf of staying on in a humanitarian capacity can be kept in place, or whether the Serbian militants will finally dispense with the charade and kick out UNPROFOR altogether. Will Bosnia exist this time next year?

But a new danger to Europe, and France in particular, is brewing in North Africa. An explosion in Algeria will send millions of people across the Mediterranean. The new pieds noirs are culturally French but ethnically North African, and as refugees they will find they have fled Islamic fundamentalism to face European racism.

For Europe, an Algerian war and Algerian boat people may be the agonising cause in 1995.

Japan goes soul-searching

By Brian Williams

Reuter

TOKYO — Japan, looking down the barrel of a year when its World War II past comes under the glare of 50th anniversary scrutiny, is going through an intense period of soul-searching.

"Prescription for Japan: Time to change," "sunshine and amnesty at work in Japan," "dreams for another golden age depend on reform," "Japan's vitality is in danger," — these have already become familiar reading for Japanese in the first week of 1995.

The debate, the questioning, goes much further than the immediate anniversary focus of the August 6 atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Japan's formal World War II surrender nine days later on August 15, 1945.

It is entangled in where Japan should be heading as it comes out of its worst modern recession, ironically leaving the country in a crisis about its future.

If the 1980's taught the Japanese to celebrate their success, then the 1990's have provoked the most severe crisis of national confidence since 1945.

The Japan Times said in a new year's day article, "If Japan's economic prosperity ends, will the nation now decline. These timid questions are being heard in various sectors of society," the country's largest-selling newspaper, the daily Yomiuri said in its new year's day editorial.

"Is Japan's economic prosperity ending. Will the nation now decline. These timid questions are being heard in various sectors of society," the country's largest-selling newspaper, the daily Yomiuri said in its new year's day editorial.

For some foreigners, eyeing Japan's status as a country where Tiffany's can have a branch in a provincial — if imperial — town like Kyoto, the angst seems out of tune.

But for many Japanese, the wealth has left the question, "what now?"

Hopes that reform of the country's political system over the past 18 months would lead the nation to a historic turning, with its very fate at stake," the Yomiuri editorial said.

"Should we cling to old modes of thinking and outdated institutions, the peace and prosperity we enjoy would certainly become things of the past. In this sense, the nation faces a historic turning, with its very fate at stake," the Yomiuri editorial said.

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New government is sworn in

(Continued from page 1)

Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Nader Thubeirat is the representative of the five-member parliamentary Ikhā' (Brotherhood) bloc.

The five independent lawmakers who joined the government are Awad Kleifat (youth), Jamal Sareikh (post and telecommunication), Ali Abu Raghbeh (trade and industry), Samir Habashneh (culture) and Mohammad Abu Olein (state).

Ultra-nationalist leftist deputies, like the IAF, stayed out of the government. They are represented by five deputies who voted along with the Islamists against the Oct. 26 peace treaty with Israel.

IAF spokesman Hamzeh Mansour said the prime minister-designate "ignored the largest parliamentary bloc in the House" by failing to consult with them on the composition of the government.

Though Sharif Zeid met with IAF Deputy Ahmad Rahim Al Okour and the overall leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Abdul Majid Thuneibat, the meeting did not discuss the formation of the government directly and Mr. Mansour said the meeting was with the Islamist movement and not with the IAF parliamentary bloc.

"That meeting did not concern us. The prime minister-designate ignored our parliamentary bloc," said Mr. Mansour.

Sharif Zeid pledges to achieve goals

(Continued from page 1)

ensure that professional unions undertake the right responsibilities and perform the tasks that are expected of them, Sharif Zeid said: "We believe that these institutions' non-commitment to the decision of the majority of people would be a breach of national consensus."

The new prime minister also pledged to work towards restoring Arab solidarity, enhancing Jordan's international relations and promoting the Kingdom's role in all levels.

"We will give due attention to culture and information in a manner that would enrich the society's beliefs and principles," Sharif Zeid said.

Following is a Jordan Times translation of Sharif Zeid's letter to the King:

I have received Your Majesty's letter of designation with deep appreciation and allegiance to your Throne. I have always served by your side as a soldier of the Great Arab Revolt, aiming to achieve the aspirations of the revolt and to ensure freedom and democracy for the Arab Nation.

Your letter designating me to be prime minister is a great honour I will always cherish as I always feel the pride of having accompanied you throughout my life.

The Kingdom is in dire need of strenuous efforts while it is at the threshold of a new stage, requiring every endeavour and energy for construction and for creative work.

Your Majesty has been offering sacrifices for your people and nation, particularly the Palestinian people and their cause, and you have spared no effort in defending the nation's rights in every field.

Your efforts have led to the restoration of Jordan's full rights in land and water as part of the overall endeavour for a comprehensive, lasting and just peace, and you continue to pursue efforts in defending the Palestinian people's rights and the holy places in Jerusalem.

The Jordanian Armed Forces, who bear the standards of the Great Arab Revolt and are true to its principles and goals, are resolved to pursue their efforts in defending the nation and therefore the Armed Forces would be given due care and attention by the government in terms of equipment and reorganization.

Ciller to democratise constitution

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish Premier Tansu Ciller has outlined plans to modify and democratise the 1982 constitution she inherited from the military, to offset Western criticism of Ankara's human rights record.

In a statement released by her government's press service, Ms. Ciller promised to lift restrictions on freedom of expression which still exist in

one colour and is not representative of all the political trends in the country."

Bassam Haddadin and Mr. Mansour said they believed the new government was no different from its predecessors in terms of the political orientation of its members.

An influential IAF source told the Jordan Times Saturday that the group would not have accepted portfolios that did not correspond with its weight in Parliament and among the public at large.

Leftist Deputy Bassam Haddadin quoted Sharif Zeid as telling representatives of fellow-leftist deputies Sunday that he did not offer ministerial positions to the IAF members "because they themselves did not want to participate and because they would form opposition within the government if they joined it."

The apparent displeasure of the IAF over "ignoring" them in the process of consultation for forming the cabinet seems to weaken earlier reports that the government would have good relations with the Islamists even though they would not join it.

The IAF had expected the prime minister-designate would consult with them over his team, members of the group said.

Unhappiness with the government was also expressed by Mr. Haddadin who told the Jordan Times that he and his other two leftist colleagues, Khalil Haddadin and Mustapha Shneikat, believe the government "has only

given due care to the security services so that they will remain the shield of the nation, helping to ensure its security and stability and guard protecting democracy and freedom."

The government will give due care to the youth for whom it will facilitate education at the school and university levels in a manner that would cater to the needs of the future. The youth will be provided with education that would cater to the requirements of the modern age and their potential will be well-utilised in every possible way.

The government will pursue the construction of infrastructure and provide social and health services in all regions of the country with fair distribution. But it will give priority to agriculture, will stimulate the national economy, will release the potential of the private sector, encourage investments in agriculture, industry, tourism and will protect the environment from pollution. Above all, it will give due attention to dealing with unemployment and poverty.

The new phase facing the country, which has been enhanced by democracy, makes it incumbent on the government to enhance the democratic process and we will be keen on cooperating with the legislative authority and helping lay the foundation of real parliamentary life in a manner that would help promote cooperation between the legislative and executive authorities.

We have sought peace which we achieved through the will of the people and was blessed by our national institutions.

We are confident that the various federations and professional unions would bear their own responsibilities towards peace and the nation and would abide by the country's laws. We believe that these institutions' non-commitment to the decision of the majority of people would be a breach of the national consensus and would not serve the interests of the nation or achieve its aspirations.

Earlier, King Hussein received at the Royal Court the outgoing prime minister and his Cabinet and thanked them for their dedicated efforts to serve their country and people.

A Royal Decree was also issued Sunday appointing Mr. Qasem as chief of the Royal Court with immediate effect.

Ms. Ciller has long attempted to advance Turkey's case for joining the 15-member European Union (EU) but has been rebuffed because of the human rights violations in the country.

Ms. Ciller notably underlined the necessity of a change in article 14 of the constitution, which forbids the "misuse" of freedoms

and fundamental rights to allow linguistic, racial or religious discrimination.

The article is used to justify clampdowns on pro-Kurdish activities.

Ms. Ciller said she also hoped Turkish political parties would create branches for women and young people as well as allow students and universities to join parties,

A 'soldier' with a political mission

By Saleh Ne'matt
Special to the Jordan Times

FIELD MARSHAL Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, who Sunday formed his third government in six years, insists that he is no politician.

based Al Hayat, Arabic daily, "Abu Shaker" reflects on how he found himself immersed in politics: "One day I was at the army headquarters in my military uniform, the next I came to the Royal Court in civilian clothes... There was no transitional period."

He confesses that he prefers military life to politics, despite his success as prime minister between April, 27, 1989 and Nov. 8, 1989 and then between November, 1991 and May 1993.

"I feel I have done my best, but I did not enjoy my work as prime minister. It was not my choice, I did it because it was the wish of His Majesty the King."

After the November, 1989 elections, the veteran prime minister Muad Badran, who had headed several governments between 1978 and 1984, was appointed to deal with the post-elections era, including an over-enthusiastic Parliament almost dominated by hardline Islamists and leftists. Mr. Badran immediately sought to contain and appease the Islamic opposition (which occupied 23 seats in Parliament), by handing the Islamic bloc five cabinet portfolios after a series of secret negotiations that were described as "consultations." Mr. Badran, at the time, said that it was necessary to offer some "marginal concessions" to the then Muslim Brotherhood who represented the biggest single bloc in the House, with the aim of facilitating the government's work and passing laws proposed by the executive.

Four months into his political career, following the violent riots of April 1989 (which forced the resignation of prime minister Zeid Rifai's government), Sharif Zeid found himself forming a transitional government entrusted with holding the first general elections in 23 years.

Although the roots of the riots in the spring of 1989 were economic in nature, there had to be a political solution. King Hussein, who was at the time on an official visit to Washington, cut short his visit and returned to deal with the crisis. He felt the need for a new face at the helm of the government and a new concept for national security that would give more emphasis to socio-economic considerations, rather than politics alone. The King, who moved to defuse the crisis, found no one better for the job than Sharif Zeid.

In his November interview with the London-



"I do not consider myself a professional politician. I am a professional soldier, which is the job I have chosen from the beginning."

cabinet managed to secure a vote of confidence from Parliament only after the King intervened by summoning several members of the House to ask them, indirectly as usual, to back Mr. Maari.

But the premier, under pressure by a generally hostile Parliament, committed a political faux pas when he publicly declared, despite indications to the contrary, that his government would not be the one to negotiate with Israel. The King had announced a few days earlier, during a visit by then U.S. secretary of state James Baker, that Jordan would be the first to take part in peace negotiations.

With the launching of American efforts to convene a multi-party peace process in the summer of 1991, the King appointed Taher Maari, a Jordanian of Palestinian origin, to deal with the post-Gulf war phase and the beginning of the peace process. But the liberal Maari, even before announcing the names of his cabinet members, plunged into a confrontation with Parliament in which the Islamic bloc formed a coalition with East Jordanian establishment deputies (the Constitutional bloc) to block the negative vote by the Islamic bloc. The Hindawi group, which was allied with the Islamists against Mr. Maari, was opposed, in principle, to a Jordanian of Palestinian origin heading the government. The Maari

not his political programme.

"Abu Shaker" does not deny that being a Hashemite and a cousin of the King has given him a sort of "immunity" and has helped him contain the political opposition in a way not possible for any other politician. He explains that "being a member of the Hashemite family certainly worked in my favour rather than against me; but His Majesty does not choose people because they are his relatives. Rather he chooses them because they can do the job entrusted to them."

Politicians who worked with Sharif Zeid during his two terms, say that the man surprised them with his success in making the transition from a military man to a politician.

When he formed his first government, we thought that, being a military man and a member of the Royal Family, he would be dealing with us in a military and condescending style," says Mr. Hindawi, who served as deputy prime minister in Sharif Zeid's 1991-1992 cabinet. "But he was one of the most open and democratic premiers I have worked with."

Mr. Hindawi maintains that Sharif Zeid's Hashemite background was not the decisive factor in his success. When Sharif Hussein Ben Nasser was appointed prime minister in 1966, he could not keep his position for more than four months.

Mr. Hindawi denies allegations that Sharif Zeid also sought, in his second term, to appease the Islamists through secret deals which were reportedly responsible for the "truce" between the Islamists and the government.

The appointment of Sharif Zeid for a third term, despite his ambivalence about the job, underscores once again how indispensable the man has become for the King. Sharif Zeid is perhaps the best option when the situation requires a very strong relationship between the government and the palace on the one hand, and the military/security establishment on the other," a prominent Jordanian says.

Observers believe these qualities are indispensable in the context of dealing with the repercussions of Jordan's peace treaty with Israel and building the foundations for future relations between Jordanians and Palestinians.

PLO, Israeli government seek to defuse scandal

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israeli government joined ranks Sunday in an effort to defuse a political scandal over their alleged coordination in the last elections.

The right-wing opposition Likud bloc, accusing Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of collusion with a group which was still Israel's enemy at the time of the 1992 polls, called a meeting of its leaders to adopt a formal stand.

The political storm erupted Saturday after Israeli Radio broadcast extracts from a book written by Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), a key PLO negotiator of the autonomy accord he himself signed in September 1993 after secret talks in Norway.

On the Palestinian side, Ahmad Tibi, advisor to PLO leader Yasir Arafat, denied the account at a press conference in East Jerusalem saying it was "completely baseless."

The PLO has never intervened in favor of the Labour Party in these elections and rejects the accusations of interference in Israeli affairs, made by parties opposed to the peace process," he said.

Dr. Tibi acknowledged, however, that minutes of contacts between the PLO and Labour had been inserted into a reissue of Abu Mazen's book in Beirut and would be removed in the next edition.

The PLO and Labour held secret talks in the run-up to the poll, he writes.

The key encounter took place in Israel in April 1992, during which PLO envoy Said Kanaan expressed "satisfaction with the Labour Party platform" and offered "help to win the elections."

Mr. Kanaan, a businessman from the occupied West Bank town of Nablus, at first confirmed the information

U.S. pilot's release rescues N. Korea nuclear deal

By Patrick Worsnip

Reuter

WASHINGTON — By negotiating the release of its downed helicopter pilot in North Korea, the U.S. administration has rescued its nuclear deal with Pyongyang, a centrepiece of Washington's foreign policy.

Sources close to the administration say North Korea had been told firmly that it would be difficult to proceed with the landmark accord unless the pilot, chief warrant officer Bobby Hall, was freed quickly.

Congress has no formal power to stop the agreement as such, but Republicans had warned they could seek to block funding for one of its first provisions — supply of heavy oil to North Korea.

The oil is to compensate Pyongyang for loss of energy as a result of its agreement two months ago to freeze its nuclear programme. North Korea will also eventually receive new nuclear reactors that produce less bomb-making plutonium than its present models.

Friday's release of Mr. Hall, whose helicopter came down just inside North Korea on Dec. 17, now makes such action by Congress unlikely, a point indirectly acknowledged by Thomas Hubbard, the U.S.

envoy sent to Pyongyang to resolve the incident.

"(North Korea) has up to now faithfully implemented its part of the agreed framework and we believe that it is in our interest that we do the same and we are therefore pleased that we can now look to the future and implement the important project," Mr. Hubbard said.

Key figures such as Senate Republican leader Bob Dole have said they plan to subject the agreement — some regard as a poor deal for the United States — to close scrutiny at congressional hearings.

But the administration is certain to argue that there is little alternative to the pact, which U.S. leaders say has averted a dangerous nuclear crisis in East Asia.

Under the agreement, Pyongyang is to be compensated fuel from North Korea's old graphite-moderated reactors which were shipped out of the country, preventing its use in nuclear weapons.

South Korea is to foot the bulk of the \$4 billion bill for the new light-water reactors.

Despite agreeing to hand over Mr. Hall, Pyongyang has extracted several concessions from the United States in its drive for political recognition from Washington, analysts said.

To sue for Mr. Hall's release, the State Department

Economy

JORDAN TIMES, MONDAY, JANUARY 9, 1995

Arabs press on with ambitious trade date project

U DHABI (AFP) — Arab states are pressing ahead with an ambitious plan to bolster flagging inter-Arab trade that has remained a fraction of their total trade, hindered plans to achieve economic integration.

The Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), the main regional financial organisation, is carrying out the trade data network, part of a \$500 million it created five years ago to enhance commercial exchanges among Arab nations. The first two stages of the computerised network, launched three years ago, have been completed and the final will be finished shortly. The third stage involves the data network with its member states and will be completed early this year, an AMF statement said.

The network will distribute information to the Arab group's 22 members on facts, products, demand, oil prices, and the economy of each member state, being set up with the help of the World Trade Centre of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The network runs parallel to another AMF-sponsored project involving setting up a computerised data base to develop resources in the region as part of the AMF's plans to help member states in implementing reforms.

AMF officials said the data bank would help boost trade among Arab countries.

Lack of information about local markets is one of the obstacles blocking the movement of goods among them. Other obstacles are political rifts, funds shortage, trade barriers and poor infrastructure.

Political rifts have also blamed for the low demand for the trade financing, which has extended \$250 million in trade as compared with its initial financing capacity of

Qatar signs LNG pact with Turkey, eyes China

DOHA (R) — The head of Qatar's ambitious liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects signed a letter of intent Sunday to supply LNG to Turkey and also forecast major sales to China and Thailand.

The letter of intent with Turkish state-owned pipeline firm Botas develops a government-to-government memorandum of understanding signed Saturday, providing for two million tonnes a year of LNG with a Turkish option to double that.

It was signed on the Qatari side by Jaber Al Marri, chairman of the Ras Laffan Liquefied Gas Co. (Rasgas) and director-general of the government's Qatar General Petroleum Corp (QGPC).

Mr. Marri said the letter "gives a solid basis for the Ras Laffan project to get off the ground."

"We are confident that the letter of intent we have signed will be translated into firm sales-and-purchase agreements before December, and we are going ahead with the Ras Laffan project," Mr. Marri told Reuters.

Mr. Marri said he was setting off for China later Sunday to discuss the sale of 2.5 million tonnes a year of LNG there, with an option for another two million tonnes. It was the first time a quantity was mentioned for China.

He will also visit Thailand to discuss the supply of two million tonnes a year, he added.

The tempo has picked up in the past two months in the drive to win the necessary long-term customers for Rasgas to get off the ground. QGPC owns 70 per cent of Rasgas, and Mobil Corp the rest.

Rasgas — the second of Qatar's multi-billion-dollar LNG projects, designed to exploit the Gulf emirate's enormous gas reserves — now has letters of intent to supply nine million tonnes of LNG with an option for two million more.

Unions see million jobless in eastern Germany

Bonn's chief 'wise man' sees better '95 growth

growth at 1.75 per cent this year, down from the 2.5 per cent forecast for 1994.

But Mr. Hax, chairman of the panel dubbed the "five wise men," said: "I consider this appraisal too pessimistic. The developments in the last three months indicate that the prospects are even better now than they were in the autumn, in my view."

Mr. Hax said that for west Germany alone, real growth of 2.5 per cent to three per cent was "quite possible." In its annual report issued in November, the council foresaw pan-German GDP growth at a projected three per cent in 1994 and three per cent in 1995.

It predicted that GDP in west Germany had risen by a projected two per cent last year and would rise 2.5 per cent in 1995. It saw east German GDP growing 9.5 per cent in 1994 and nine per cent this year.

Mr. Hax warned in the Express interview that the largest stumbling block to recovery were high wage costs and high personal and corporate taxes that were shackling investment.

"Germany desperately needs investment. A lot of that depends on wage costs, but not only on them," he said. "The tax burden is a great impediment, with regard to not only employers but also employees, in creating jobs and boosting consumption."

The DIW institute blamed European central banks for impeding long-term recovery by failing to "decouple" from monetary-policy developments in the United States.

The DIW forecast that pan-German GDP would expand by two per cent this year, slowing from a projected three per cent in 1994.

Apart from 1.75 per cent GDP growth in the West this

year, the DIW said that in former communist eastern Germany, the surge in economic growth would slow to 7.5 per cent in 1995 from a projected nine per cent last year.

The German Confederation of Unions (DGB) said in Berlin that it expects there will be a million unemployed workers in former East Germany from this year until the end of the century.

There were 980,448 unemployed workers in that part of Germany in November, out of a total of 3.43 million in the whole country, and that was the first time since June 1991 that the figure for eastern Germany dipped below a million.

The unemployment rate in former East Germany stood at 13 per cent in November against 13.3 per cent in October. It had been 15.1 per cent in November 1993.

DGB vice-president Ursula Engel-Keller said the figure

present Laender that constituted East Germany will have an average of 6.2 million jobs between now and the end of the century, but employment there will not return to the 1992 level until the year 2003.

Basing herself on Labour Office data, Ms. Engel-Keller said she allowed in her figures for an annual economic growth rate of 10 per cent in eastern Germany — but the effects of such growth on employment will be attenuated by greater rationalisation, she said.

She added that productivity in former East Germany would come up to the level in former West Germany in the year 2010.

Finally, gross per capita income will amount to 3,800 marks (\$2,500) in eastern Germany in the year 2000, she said, 14 per cent below the level in western Germany at that time.

Chechenya campaign casts shadow over Russian reform

MOSCOW (R) — Russia's Chechenya campaign is casting a dark shadow over economic reform, amid fears that it could scupper chances of turning round an ailing economy and bringing inflation down.

The Russian economy has started to feel the consequences of the Chechen crisis," Interfax News Agency Friday quoted President Boris Yeltsin's top economic aide as saying.

It is not only the direct cost of restoring the economy of Chechenya ... but more importantly expectations of inflation are rising," Alexander Livshits said. "In the next two or three months at least 85 per cent of company directors will raise prices for their products. In the autumn this was not more than 50 per cent."

Officials have already admitted they will need extra money to pay for the military operation and to rebuild a regional oil-based economy devastated by Russian bombing raids.

"We will need endless tril-

lions of roubles to repair what has been destroyed and to make the republic look civilised again," a parliamentary budget official said.

Fuel and energy ministry officials have already drawn up plans to repair Chechen oil wells and equipment, and they hope to bring annual oil output back to 1991 levels of four million tonnes. Chechenya declared unilateral independence in 1991.

But economists fear extra expenditure from the fighting and the reconstruction work will widen the budget deficit and drive inflation up.

"The economic situation in Russia is already very vulnerable and Chechenya has not helped a bit," one Western economist said.

"It does cast doubts on Russia's ability to sustain a course of economic stabilisation in 1995."

The government's 1995 budget draft originally promised to bring monthly inflation down to one or two per cent by the second half of this year. But this forecast, like those for 1994, soon turned

Asked why the bank had

raised its rate, central bank spokesman Alexander Sutin said: "Just look at inflation."

The rate fell to 3,661 to the dollar on the Moscow Interbank Currency Exchange Friday, from 3,623 on Thursday and 3,550 at the end of last year.

Dealers said the central bank had spent at least \$220 million over the last two days in currency market intervention to prevent a bigger rout.

The central bank is not in a position where it can afford to spend massive amounts of foreign exchange, an economist said.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, JANUARY 9, 1995

By Thomas S. Pearson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Get busy with your career plans and show that you are dynamic before noon. The afternoon Venus square Mars aspect puts a damper on relationships making people irritable, impulsive and self-indulgent.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Be careful of making a monetary mistake in the morning. Then you can go about getting your talents expressed nicely.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 18) Talk matters over with your loved ones since you are not thinking clearly now and get right answer. Extend invitations to important people.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) A secret worry could deter you from accomplishing something important, if you do not snap out of it. Think and grow.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Early, plan just how to help a friend who is disturbed, and later you can have a jolly time with allies. Keep active.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Early morning talk with a powerful person could bring you real trouble, but later you can gradually get help. Show your abilities.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) You get a good idea and want to toss aside those duties you have promised to handle, but carry through instead. Be happy.

LIBRA: (September 22 to October 21) First handle some important responsibilities and then get out with generous friends and have a good time with them. Be happy.

SCORPIO: (October 22 to November 21) Don't permit an irate partner to hold you back from accomplishing much in the outside world. Think big and you can get everything.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get your tasks completed early so that later you can be with those who can help you to advance more quickly in your occupation.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Set up that appointment for fun and then find better ways of keeping promises you have made to others. Show thoughtfulness to mate.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Forget that easy chair, get together with associates and accomplish a great deal today. Show your real abilities to higher-ups.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Don't waste time shopping when there are much more important tasks to do as well as getting your environment more charming in the meantime.

Birthstone of January: Garnet — Rose Quartz

Mexican bank woes add new twist to peso drama

MEXICO CITY (R) — Mexican banks have become the first casualty of last month's peso devaluation, and analysts say only government intervention can save some of the smaller banks from closing this year.

A slowing economy, high inflation and climbing interest rates — projections for 5.5 per cent by the government last week — are about as bad as it gets for a banking sector that is already stricken by problem loans.

Analysts say most banks are badly weakened by the larger crisis affecting the country as a whole, Mexican

bank travails came into the spotlight last week as fears mounted over their solvency.

Mexican stocks and the peso, the country's currency, the new peso, fell sharply on Friday on fears that some of the banks' international creditors were turning off badly-needed credit lines and demanding repayment.

Those fears centred on lower-tiered banks. Shares of Banpais, a mid-sized Monterrey bank which Mexican analysts say has been sloppily managed and in trouble for months, tumbled 46.05 per cent on the Mexican stock market.

banks may need help from Mexico's financial authorities to honour their foreign currency debts.

Preparing for the worst, Mexican officials are already making contingency plans to deal with bank emergencies that they say will include extra financing funnelled through the bank bail-out fund Fobaproa.

On Thursday, Finance Minister Guillermo Ortiz also said Mexico would increase the stake foreign banks are allowed to invest in their Mexican counterparts.

Mexican banks have scrapped their own expansion

plans.

"Our restructuring plan was based on the consideration that there would be important loan growth this year," Eduardo Garcia Lecuona, a top official for Mexico's third largest bank, Banco Serfin, said recently.

"Now that we don't think our portfolio will be growing, we won't need as much capital."

As the immediate shock of the 30-40 per cent devaluation turns into a slow, painful slog back toward recovery, experts warn that even more serious perils lurk for the banks in the form of slow economic growth.

BEARINGS



Jeff



THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

POAZT
CLIUD
VOONCY
KHENAS

That lighter shade helped

How the painter made the room "warmer".

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surfer's answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: WITH A

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumble: WALTZ

Answer: IGLOO CUDGEL QUIVER

How the astronauts described their view from space — OUT OF THIS WORLD.

THE Daily Crossword

by Stanley E. Whitten

Puzzle solved

6x6 grid

1 Land or sea ending in -land

8 Farm measure

10 High school class

14 U.S. president

15 Soon afterwards

17 Maternally related

18 Spotted copy

20 Copies

22 Title of work

24 Figure stellar or

25 Adage

27 Garland

28 Name header

31 Date

33 Silence sound

35 Present

37 Figure sister of

Business & Finance

**Business
Daily
Beat**

A review
of economic news
from the Arabic press

Used shoes and clothes make better business

★★ Retailers blame wholesalers for price rises and say this situation is something that should be taken for granted. Wholesalers, for their part, say that prices had risen at the suppliers' end and point out that children's clothing went up by 40 per cent because of higher cost of imports. A retailer gave an example of higher prices from wholesalers, saying a dozen Thai jeans cost JD 80 in the past, while now wholesalers are asking for JD 105 for the same amount. An owner of a shoe shop stresses that his businesses had their shops closed and took up selling used clothes and shoes. "Thank God, selling used clothes and shoes is a million times better than selling new shoes. In the near past I was eager to see anybody entering my shop, now people are eager to see me," he said.

★★ It is rumoured that some banks are offering as high as 10 per cent interest on deposits since the Central Bank of Jordan sanctioned a rise in interest rates to defend the stability of the dinar. With rates that high on deposits, interest rates on loans and overdrafts may not stop at 12 per cent but could increase to 12 per cent + one per cent. Some observers fear lending rates may shoot up to 14 per cent or even 15 per cent by mid-1995 (Al Aswaq).

★★ Based on an approach to raise the capital of the Jordan Investment and Finance Bank to JD 10 million, the bank has capitalised JD 4 million of the voluntary and special reserves as well as retained earnings. The capitalisation was carried out by giving shareholders, registered on Oct. 29, 1994, eight free shares for every nine shares they held. The remaining JD 1.5 million of the capital increase will be floated in a private subscription to shareholders registered on Dec. 27, 1994 at JD 2,750 per share (one dinar per value + JD 1.750 premium). Further details will be announced at a later date (Al Ra'i).

★★ Jordan will be joining 71 other countries grouped in the "agreement for facilitation of international maritime traffic" after obtaining a government approval in this regard. The agreement, which was enacted in 1967, aims at simplifying procedures for sea transport (Al Dusour).

★★ A Jordanian maritime service company obtained an agency at the port of Gaza to transport goods to Jordan and on to outside markets. The company, which received approvals from the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Palestinian authority, has recently opened a branch in Ramallah. The branch will operate as the agent for Gaza port in Amman and as agent for Aqaba port in the Palestinian territories (Al Ra'i).

★★ A 50,000-tonne shipment of maize arrived in Aqaba and will be distributed to poultry farmers by the Ministry of Supply after being checked to see if it is fit for consumption (Al Ra'i).

★★ Hashem Sabagh has been appointed as an economic advisor to the prime minister. Dr. Sabagh was director-general of the Amman Financial Market before being seconded to work in Oman (Al Dusour).

★★ Jordan Steel shares were listed Sunday on the parallel market of the Amman Financial Market. Shares of real estate investment (Aqarco) and Zarka private university were suspended pending a decision on the premium to be charged for the increase in capital of both companies (Al Aswaq).

Study: British bond market fell 8% in '94

LONDON (AFP) — The Eurobond market fell by 8.0 per cent in 1994 when issues worth \$455 billion were made from a figure of \$496 billion in 1993, Euromarks said.

The Eurodollar was the main currency used, by a wide margin, accounting for 40 per cent of new issues from 38 per cent in 1993 because the dollar was used as a store of value in troubled times.

Issues in French Eurobonds remained in third place, totalling \$24 billion, which was 38 per cent less than in 1993. In sixth place was the Swiss franc, totalling \$22 billion, followed by the lira, totalling \$17 billion. The amount of lire issues rose by 44 per cent owing to a high yield offered on lira loans.

The ECU, in eleventh place, fell short of a total of \$7 billion. Before Danes had voted against the Maastricht treaty for European Union in a first referendum in June 1992 the ECU had been the second most-used currency after the dollar. But the role of European

currencies had been severely weakened by turmoil in 1994. Issues in Euromarks bad fallen by 44 per cent to \$30.4 billion. Eurosterling fell to third place, totalling \$30.9 billion. The issues denominated in sterling fell by 32 per cent.

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Ipswich and Leeds upset in F.A. Cup

LONDON (R) — Veteran defender Gary Bennett slotted home a penalty four minutes from time as second division Wrexham shocked Premier League strugglers Ipswich 2-1 in the F.A. Cup Saturday.

The tiny Welsh club who humbled Arsenal in the third round three years ago were giant killers on a day when the aspirations of four Minor League sides foundered on the rock solid defences of their rivals in the English soccer elite.

Leeds United defender David Wetherall denied third division Walsall a major scalp reminiscient of their 1932 giantkilling act over mighty Arsenal with an 87th minute equaliser in a 1-1 draw.

Wolverhampton Wanderers, four times winners and gunning for promotion from the first division, came from 2-0 down at third division Mansfield to win 3-2, scoring three goals in 19 minutes.

Minor League Aylesbury were crushed 4-0 by Queen's Park Rangers in a home game rescheduled to their rivals' West London ground, while Altrincham fell 3-0 to eight times F.A. Cup winners Tottenham Hotspur at White Hart Lane.

Marlow and Enfield, two more Minor League sides who played away, both lost 2-0 to first division Swindon and Premier League Leicestershire.

Second division leaders Birmingham, unbeaten in 21 games, held second favourites Liverpool, winners in 1989 and 1992, 0-0, while first division Millwall also held Arsenal 0-0.

Sheffield Wednesday survived the sending off of their goalkeeper Kevin Pressman just before half time to win 2-1 at third division Gillingham after former Tottenham, Marseilles and England winner Chris Waddle had opened their account.

Two players were also sent off in Norwich City's 1-0 win away to first division Grimsby, while visiting Stoke fans invaded the pitch and clashed with stewards and police at half-time in the goalless draw in the all first division game at Bristol City.

Manchester United, favourites to retain the F.A. Cup and gunning for a second successive double including the league title, are away to

Cup romance lives on in a Tottenham shirt

LONDON (R) — The English F.A. Cup is not only the oldest knockout competition in world soccer but, as every fan knows, the one which regularly produces upset results and heroic achievement better suited to tales of romantic fiction.

Giant-killing acts from years gone by are part of the fabric of English soccer and famous upsets like Walsall's victory over Arsenal in 1933, Yeovil's win over Sunderland (1948) or Sutton's success against Coventry (1989) are regularly shown on television as part of the build-up to the third round when the surviving minnows from the qualifying rounds come face to face with the big guns.

The build-up to this weekend's third round matches was no exception, but TV producers of the future will give the third round of 1995 a miss when looking for archive material.

All four non-league sides were comprehensively beaten and failed to score.

Marlow went down 2-0 at Swindon, Enfield were beaten 2-0 at Leicester, Aylesbury lost 4-0 at Queens Park Rangers, and although Altrincham lost 3-0 at Tottenham the magic of the Cup lived on after the match.

Altrincham's visit to White Hart Lane was always going to be one of the most intriguing ties simply because it looked as though it would never take place.

Last summer Tottenham were expelled from the Cup as part of their punishment for financial irregularities and were only re-instated after the draw for the third round was made.

If Tottenham had not been allowed back in, Altrincham would have received a bye into the fourth round, but even though his side lost, manager John King was delighted the tie went ahead.

"I'm disappointed we lost, but we did not disgrace ourselves and this match is a highlight in the history of Altrincham Football Club. I would much rather have played and lost than not played it and got a bye into the next round."

"Look what my players have gained today. They have played against world class players like Jürgen Klinsmann and not been disgraced. They'll remember it for ever."

Altrincham striker Andy Green said: "This was our big day, our Cup final. We may have lost but there were 25,000 people there watching us. On Wednesday it's the Cheshire senior cup in front of 200 people and with two floodlights up half the pitch."

"We didn't win today, but the magic of the Cup was that we are here."

Coincidentally, Tottenham and Altrincham, who come from different galaxies as far as the football universe is concerned, have met in the competition before.

Sixteen years ago this week, their paths crossed with Altrincham holding Spurs to a 1-1 draw at White Hart Lane before Spurs won the replay 3-0 at Manchester City's ground.

But once Altrincham fell behind there was no way back. Substitute Shaun Constable did get the ball in the Tottenham net after 72 minutes but it was disallowed for an infringement and Tottenham sewed up the match when defender Stuart Nethercott scored his first ever goal for the club nine minutes from time.

While Altrincham will have to wait at least a year to add another name to the 16 victories they have recorded against league sides in the past, Tottenham have moved a small step along the way to the final itself, which they have won eight times, a record they share with Manchester United.

They have now gone 10 matches without losing and six matches without conceding a goal since Gary Francis took over as manager in November and a season which went so badly wrong under former Manager Ossie Ardiles could yet end with Tottenham winning a trophy.

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Milwaukee Bucks forward Vin Baker dunks over Utah Jazz center Felton Spencer (AP Wirephoto)

Barkley paces Suns past Nuggets

DENVER (R) — Charles Barkley scored 22 points and Danny Manning had six of his 20 in an 18-7 fourth-quarter run to give the streaking Phoenix Suns defeated the Denver Nuggets, 109-100 Saturday.

Rookie Wesley Person added 15 points for Phoenix, which improved to a Western Conference-best 24-7.

The Suns have won 12 of their last 14 games.

Bryant Stith scored 18 points and Reggie Williams had 17 for the Nuggets, who had lost nine of their last 14 games.

In Charlotte, Alonzo Mourning scored 33 points and grabbed 13 rebounds and Larry Johnson scored six of his 23 points during a key 10-2 fourth-quarter run, leading the streaking Charlotte Hornets to a come-from-

"...and 106-98 victory over Boston Celtics.

Mugsy Bogues chipped in with 20 points for the Hornets.

Dominique Wilkins scored 24 points and Pervis Ellison had 20 points and 12 rebounds for the Celtics, who lost their sixth of eight games.

In Washington, Rod Strickland scored a season-high 31 points and had 11 assists as the Portland Trail Blazers defeated the Washington Bullets, 114-105.

Clifford Robinson added 24 and Clyde Drexler had 18 for Portland, which wrapped up its five-game road trip 3-2.

"We were really moving the ball well and we took advantage of their double teams," Robinson said. "We played well tonight."

"The union feels it has bent over backwards," Anaheim Mighty Ducks player Bob Corkum said.

Owners were not unified

behind the proposal they sent back to the union Saturday either.

"I'm not sure if we can live with it or not," San Jose owner George Gund said. "We certainly can't live with anything less."

League commissioner Gary Bettman said owners voted 19-7 to reject the players' offer and cancel the season Tuesday if no deal is reached.

Atlanta held a 68-65 advantage with 10:38 left in the fourth before the game-breaking run.

The Nets, who have lost seven of their last eight games, were led by Derrick Coleman's 16 points and 11 rebounds. They shot a miserable 36 per cent from the field.

Hakeem Olajuwon led the Rockets with 27 points and 16 rebounds, but missed several big shots down the stretch. The loss snapped Houston's six-game winning streak.

"I'm very disappointed with the way we took the floor on these guys," said Houston head coach Rudy Tomjanovich. "I told them they'd be playing with a lot of pride tonight. I don't understand why they bad and fine.

Mugsy Bogues chipped in with 20 points for the Hornets.

In Los Angeles, David Robinson scored 27 points and Chuck Person had 18 of his 20 in the fourth quarter, including four three-pointers, as the San Antonio Spurs cruised past the Los Angeles Clippers 103-88.

Sean Elliott added 21 points and Dennis Rodman grabbed a season-high 22 rebounds as the Suns won their 11th of their last 12 games.

In Sacramento, Mitch Richmond hit two free throws with 1.7 seconds remaining to lift the Sacramento Kings to a 96-95 victory over the Miami Heat.

Malone credited his team's defense. "as a whole, everybody stepped up and got in going on the defensive end and when we did that it seemed like the easy shots were coming."

In Houston, Reggie Miller scored 23 points and Kevin Willis added 22 points and nine rebounds for Miami.

RESULTS

Atlanta	102 New Jersey	85
Charlotte	106 Boston	98
Cleveland	92 Chicago	78
Portland	114 Washington	105
Indiana	88 Houston	83
Phoenix	109 Denver	100
Utah		

Sports

JORDAN TIMES, MONDAY, JANUARY 9, 1995



Nigerian Augustine Eguavoen (left) goes for their game in the Intercontinental Cup, the ball against Japanese Masami Ihara during Nigeria won 3-0 (AFP photo)

Courier gets 1st title in 16 months

ADELAIDE (AFP) — Former world number one Jim Courier beat Armand Boetsch of France in the Australian hardcourt championship final Sunday to end a 16 month-long title drought.

Courier took 90 minutes to beat the unseeded Frenchman 6-2, 7-5 for his first title since he defeated Boris Becker at Indianapolis in August 1993.

Courier, who should now rise from 13 to 11 in the world rankings, said he never felt pressure to win. But added: "Winning never hurts, that's for sure."

"There was never a time when I doubted I would ever win again but it's always nice to go ahead and finally do it, and I'm looking forward to the rest of the year."

The 24-year-old American, who has won the French and Australian Opens twice, briefly quit tennis last year after a torrid time on the circuit. He received a wildcard into the main draw in Adelaide and did not relinquish a set on his way to Sunday's final.

He rarely looked in trouble against the tenacious Frenchman, ranked 53rd in the

world, who reached the final with a brilliant semi-final win over boom-serving Dutchman Richard Krajicek.

Courier shot to an early 3-0 lead and went on to win the first set comfortably, despite six of the first seven games being forced to deuce.

After both players broke serve in the opening games of the second set, the match went with serve before Courier broke in the 12th and final game to become the first American since Mike Baner in 1983 to win the Adelaide in two weeks.

"I lost a bit of confidence in my groundstrokes, especially my forehand," the Frenchman said.

"I don't know why, but I didn't feel very comfortable at the back of the court. He was hitting the ball very hard, harder than the other players."

He said Courier could still improve and be back at the top of world tennis, where he spent most of 1992 before burn-out at the end of 1993 and 1994 initiated a decline in his ranking to 13.

"He's missing some shots. Maybe he needs some more matches. This tournament will be good for his confidence because he's hitting the ball very hard," Boetsch said.

Courier, who collected \$43,000, said he still had the belief to get back to the top.

"When I'm playing well and have a good spirit my game matches up with almost everyone so it's just a question of being patient with myself rather than forcing it to happen," Courier said.

Courier will stay in Adelaide to play the exhibition international challenge starting Wednesday.

His first match is against U.S. Open champion Andre Agassi.

49ers, Steelers reach NFL semi-finals

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — San Francisco and Pittsburgh won lopsided National Football League playoff victories Saturday, earning home field advantage for the games that decide who plays in the Super Bowl.

William Floyd ran for three touchdowns and Steve Young scored two more to spark the 49ers past visiting Chicago 44-15 while host Pittsburgh ripped Cleveland 29-9 in the first playoff meeting of their 45-year rivalry.

On January 15, the 49ers will host the winner of Sunday's Dallas-Green Bay while the Steelers host the winner of Sunday's Miami-San Diego game for the other berth in the January 29 title game at Miami.

Chicago went ahead of the 49ers on Kevin Butler's 39-yard field goal 3:58 into their game, but nothing else went right for the Bears. The 49ers roared ahead 20-3 at half-time to seal Chicago's fate.

"We put some points on the board early and coasted in," Young said. "Our defense shut them down and everybody played well."

Young picked apart Chicago's defense, completing 16 of 22 passes for 143 yards before reserves took over midway into the third quarter. Young threw a seven-yard touchdown pass to Brent Jones and rushed six yards for another.

Chicago's Shaun Gayle slammed Young to the turf after his rushing score.

Pittsburgh beat Cleve-

land for the third time this season behind 133 yards rushing from Barry Foster and the throwing of Neil O'Donnell, whose 186 passing yards included a nine-yard touchdown toss to Yancey Thigpen and a two-yard scoring connection with Eric Green.

"We established our rushing early and kept moving the ball," Thigpen said. "When we get into that rhythm, it's hard to slow us up."

Keith McCordell caught a 41-yard touchdown pass for the Browns in the fourth quarter, but it was too little and too late. The Steelers' defense, which led the NFL with 55 sacks, ended the scoring by tackling Testaverde in the end zone for a two-point safety.

"They played more physically than we did," Cleveland's Eric Turner said. "They were at a championship level."

Zamorano grabs 3 as Real crush Barcelona

MADRID (Agencies) — Chilean striker Ivan Zamorano grabbed a first half hat-trick as league leaders Real Madrid crushed champion Barcelona 5-0 in Spain's clash of the giants in the Bernabeu Stadium Saturday.

Barcelona played the

second half with 10 men after Bulgarian striker Hristo Stoichkov, last year's European Footballer of the Year, was sent off on the stroke of halftime for stamping on the knee of Madrid fullback Quique Sanchez Flores.

Stoichkov's gesture of frustration, after 45 minutes of isolated in an unsupported centre-forward position, summed up Barcelona's feelings in a match in which the champions barely managed a shot on goal.

Madrid's fourth and fifth goals came within a minute of each other in the 69th and 70th minutes with Luis Enrique Martinez and Jose Amavisca supplying the final touches.

The victory consolidated Madrid's position at the top of the table with 25 points from 16 games. Barcelona now have five points adrift.

The win was perfect revenge for an equally humiliating 5-0 defeat inflicted by Barcelona Madrid in Camp Nou Stadium almost exactly a year ago.

A sell-out 107,000 crowd delighted in the opportunity of the razor-sharp Zamorano, who now leads the league's scorers with 17

goals and the midfield mastery of Danish international Michael Laudrup, who repeatedly left the Barcelona defense in confusion with his elegant dribbling and precision passing.

Loko scores hat-trick

In Paris, Nantes striker Patrice Loko hit a first-half hat-trick against Lille Saturday as the French league returned from its winter break.

Nantes' 3-0 victory puts them seven points ahead of Paris Saint Germain. And Loko has shot further ahead in the French goal scoring list with 15.

The north western club had also not scored or won at home since beating Metz 3-1 on November 5 — if you disregard their 4-0 UEFA Cup win over Switzerland's Sion.

Claude Makelele set up Loko for his 17th minute opener, but it was a bad back pass by Dane Jacob Friis-Hansen in the 34th minute which put Loko in for his second. The third, four minutes before the break, came following good work from Japet N'Doram and Reynald Pedros.

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Nantes striker Patrice Loko (left) is tackled by a defender (AFP photo)

to heavy snowfalls and has been rescheduled for February 1.

But PSG coach Luis Fernandez decided to arrange a friendly against third division

side Creteil to keep their eye in for Wednesday's crunch Pare des Princes battle against Nantes.

A 25-yard shot from Johan Micoud and a second from

Pascal Bedrossian in injury time brought hosts Cannes a 2-0 win over nine-man Nice in their Riviera derby. Cannes moved up from fourth to third spot.

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Arafat, Peres meet today

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres are to meet Monday in a new bid to overcome the deadlock in extending Palestinian self-rule on the West Bank, officials said Sunday.

Talks between the two sides have dragged as relations worsened amid a series of anti-Israeli attacks by Palestinian hardliners and a crisis over the expansion of Jewish settlements.

Last week, the army shot dead three Palestinian policemen.

Mr. Peres urged the Israeli government on Sunday not to give up the peace process despite setbacks in opinion polls. "The government must not take account of the fluctuations in public opinion," he said.

Chief PLO negotiator Nabil Shaath said the two men, due to meet at the Erez crossing point into the self-rule Gaza Strip, would mainly discuss an Israeli army pullout from Palestinian towns on the occupied West Bank.

Israel has stalled on the redeployment issue saying it fears the move would leave the 120,000 settlers in the West Bank vulnerable to attack, and has been trying to limit as much as possible any eventual pullout.

But the Palestinians have said it would be impossible to hold elections if the army is still in place.

Forty-six Israelis have died since self-rule was launched in May.

Jewish settlements and the release of 6,000 Palestinian prisoners would also figure on the agenda.

The Israeli government decided Sunday to set up a commission to study criteria for releasing more prisoners, an official said.

The joint Israeli-Palestinian committee to organise elections to a self-rule council is also due to meet Monday in Cairo, Al Tayeb Abdul Rahim, the head of Mr. Arafat's office, said.

He said the two sides were "close to an accord" on how to hold the elections and on the powers and composition of the council, in a statement published in Gaza.

The Israeli delegation to the Cairo talks will be led by Gadi Zohar, head of the military administration in the West Bank. His Palestinian counterpart will be Saeb Erkat. Both delegations will have five members.

Mr. Arafat is also due to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin although no date has been set.

Nearly 300 Palestinians held three separate demonstrations on the occupied West Bank Sunday against the expansion of Jewish settlements.

And the government discussed the issue without taking any fresh decisions.

Palestinian officials said around 100 villagers from Husan near Bethlehem prevented bulldozers opening up a new road linking the nearby settlement of Betar with the Gush Etzion settlement block.

In the same region 100 villagers from Al Khader and Arias demonstrated against the expansion of the Ephrat settlement, which they said was spreading over their land.

Amid pressure from the Palestinians and left-wing Israelis, the government a week ago halted work on 500 settlers' homes in Ephrat, but moved the work to another site closer to the settlement allowing construction to start on 260 homes.

The government Sunday discussed the further expansion of settlements without taking any new decisions, officials said.

It will hear a detailed report on the issue from the housing minister in a week's time.

Israeli military authorities announced Sunday that 50,000 Palestinian workers



His Majesty King Hussein, members of the Royal family and outgoing prime minister Abdul Salam Majali and senior Royal Court officials at Sunday's swearing-in ceremony of the new cabinet (Petra photo)

Women hail presence of Khalaf and Damen-Masri in Council of Ministers

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times



Rima Khalaf



Salwa Damen-Masri

AMMAN — The appointment for the first time of two women ministers in the newly-formed Cabinet was highly welcomed by women activists in the Kingdom who also hoped the step would be followed by other serious measures to achieve women's rights.

"It is a very positive step," said Esme Naffa, a woman activist. "But there is still a long path to go."

The appointment of Salwa Damen-Masri as minister of social development and the reappointment of Rima Khalaf to the cabinet were seen generally as a historic event that has to be consolidated by moves from within the women's movement as well as without.

"There has to be a drastic change in society's perceptions of women," said Suheir Tel, a writer and a woman activist. "Decisions to appoint women to senior posts have, for the most part, come from the top. Women have to start making it as a result of a process."

Ina'am Mufti, who is now serving as advisor to Queen Noor for planning and development, was appointed as the first woman minister in 1979. Although no women were designated to senior posts in the different governmental institutions in the period between 1987-1993, there are now, other than the two women ministers, two senators (Laila Sharaf and

Asma Khader), a lawyer and president of the Women's Union in Jordan. "They've proved to be more qualified and responsible than what many had thought."

Ms. Khader said the presence of two women ministers should strengthen hopes of a better future for women.

"Qualified women will have more confidence now that more women are appointed to senior positions," she said. "The success of these women has also its reflection on the society's view towards women."

Women activists hailed this step as complementary to several other steps that have been taken in recent years, mainly including women in municipal councils and recommending them to diplomatic missions and conferences.

"There has been a series of steps that indicate we're on the right track vis-a-vis women's development and improvement of their status in the society," Ms. Naffa said. "Appointing women by decree may not be bad after all."

Ms. Naffa said that there should also be quotas for women in Parliament, in municipal councils and everywhere.

"If there was not a quota for women in the Pakistani parliament, for instance, it would have been impossible for a woman to become prime minister there," Ms. Naffa said.

Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, president of the General Union of Women in Jordan, said the appointment of two women is a sizeable gain for the country as a whole.

"We hail Sharif Zeid's move," Ms. Abu Ghazaleh said. "It is not only a gain for women but also for all the country."

Ms. Damen-Masri, the first-time minister, told the Jordan Times yesterday that she was optimistic herself of the confidence the Jordanian leadership has placed in women.

Although she does not have specific plans for women's development at present, she hoped she'll be able to contribute to women's development and progress in the country.

"Anyone should be selected according to his/her qualification whether this person is a man or a woman," Ms. Damen-Masri, a mother of three children, stressed.

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"We hail Sharif Zeid's move," Ms. Abu Ghazaleh said. "It is not only a gain for women but also for all the country."

Ms. Damen-Masri, the first-time minister, told the Jordan Times yesterday that she was optimistic herself of the confidence the Jordanian leadership has placed in women.

Although she does not have specific plans for women's development at present, she hoped she'll be able to contribute to women's development and progress in the country.

"Anyone should be selected according to his/her qualification whether this person is a man or a woman," Ms. Damen-Masri, a mother of three children, stressed.

"There has been a series of steps that indicate we're on the right track vis-a-vis women's development and improvement of their status in the society," Ms. Naffa said. "Appointing women by decree may not be bad after all."

Ms. Naffa said that there should also be quotas for women in Parliament, in municipal councils and everywhere.

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